E/1996/33

United Nations

Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme/ United Nations Population Fund

Report of the Executive Board on its work during 1996

Economic and Social Council
Official Records, 1996
Supplement No. 13

E/1996/33

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United Nations • New York, 1997

NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures.

ISSN 0257-1501

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Part one

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

Held at United Nations Headquarters from 15 to 19 January 1996

I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

1 The outgoing President, H. E. Mr. Zbigniew Maria Wlosowicz (Poland), opened the first regular session 1996. He thanked the members of the outgoing Bureau, delegations and the Executive Board secretariat staff for having made possible the successes and achievements of the Board in 1995. The Board had adopted important and innovative legislation in 1995, in particular in relation to the successor programming arrangements, UNFPA programme priorities and future directions in light of the International Conference on Population and Development, and the budgets of UNDP and UNFPA. The legislation had firmly set the path for the renewed vitality and efficiency of the two organizations in the efforts to ensure sustainable human development and poverty eradication.

2. The outgoing President informed the Executive Board that since the third regular session 1995, the Bureau had met five times: on 6 and 26 October 1995, 14 November 1995, and 8 and 15 January 1996. The Bureau had agreed on the countries and dates for field visits in 1996, with the first one to the People's Republic of China (3-17 February) and the second to Mozambique and Malawi (9-22 June). The composition of the team visiting the People's Republic of China had been agreed upon.

3. The Bureau had reviewed the working methods of the Executive Board and had held extensive discussion on the consideration of UNDP country cooperation frameworks and UNFPA country programmes, the bulk of which would be taken up in 1997. That particular issue, referred to in document DP/1996/3 on the implementation of successor programming arrangements, was raised at the pre-session briefing for the first regular session 1996 held on 14 December 1995. He suggested that the Executive Board might wish to review the issue in conjunction with the consideration of item 3: "UNDP: Matters relating to the programming cycles".

4. The Executive Board elected, by acclamation, the following Bureau for 1996:

President	H. E. Ms. Annette DES ILES (Trinidad and Tobago)
Vice-President	Mr. Bruce L. NAMAKANDO (Zambia)
Vice-President	Ms. Cecilia B. REBONG (Philippines)
Vice-President	Mr. Milan DUBCEK (Slovakia)
Vice-President	Mr. Rolando BAHAMONDES (Canada)

5. The newly elected President of the Executive Board for 1996, Ambassador des Iles, recognized that the first day of the session coincided with the birthday commemoration of American civil rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, born in 1929. She stated that the vision and ideals of Dr. King epitomized the goals of the work of the Board. Moreover, in connection with the designation of 1996 as the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, she recalled that Dr. King had, in his final years, linked the attainment of peace and racial harmony with poverty eradication. She emphasized the need to dream and work with purpose and optimism. She

hoped for a fruitful year ahead for the Executive Board, with a prevailing spirit of consensus.

6 The Executive Board approved the following agenda for its first regular session, as contained in document DP/1995/L.1 and as amended:

Item 1. Organizational matters

UNDP segment

Item 2. UNDP: Initiatives for change

Item 3. UNDP: Matters relating to the programming cycles

Item 4. UNDP: Country programmes and related matters

Item 5. UNDP: Report on the activities of the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office

Item 6. United Nations technical cooperation activities

Item 7. United Nations Development Fund for Women

UNDP/UNFPA segment

Item 8. UNDP/UNFPA: Follow-up to and preparations for the Economic and Social Council

Item 9. UNDP/UNFPA: Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

UNFPA segment

Item 10. UNFPA: Strategy for allocation of UNFPA resources

Item 11. UNFPA: Future role of UNFPA in assessing and meeting contraceptive requirements and logistics management needs

Item 12. UNFPA: Global contraceptive commodity programme

Item 13. UNFPA: Membership in the UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy

Item 14. UNFPA: Country programmes and related matters

Item 15. UNFPA: South-South cooperation

Item 16. Other matters

7 The Executive Board decided to postpone the item on agency support costs (originally listed as agenda item 8 in document DP/1996/L.1) to the second regular session 1996.

8. The Executive Board agreed to the work plan contained in document DP/1996/L.1, as amended and distributed.

9 The Executive Board approved the report of the third regular session 1995 (DP/1995/54).

10 One delegation enquired whether UNFPA country representatives would be present during the session. The Deputy Executive Director of UNFPA said that none would be present at the session, as the items to be considered by the Executive Board under agenda item 15 were requests for additional resources for ongoing UNFPA country programmes and not requests for approval for a new cycle of assistance in those countries. He noted that UNFPA country representatives would, as in the past, participate in Board sessions at which the Board considered UNFPA country programme submissions.

Executive Board documentation

11. The Permanent Representative of Benin, on behalf of the Executive Board members belonging to the Francophone Group, raised the issue of dissemination and distribution of Board documentation in the working and official languages of the United Nations. The issue had been raised at the informal pre-session briefing on 14 December 1995. The matter was of the utmost importance to the francophone members of the Board as well as to other delegations. Respect for universality in the United Nations and multilingualism was for the francophone countries integral to the optimal and efficient functioning of UNDP and UNFPA.

12. The distribution in English only of "yellow" (advance) copies of documents posed a problem for francophone delegations: they could not hold proper consultation in the capitals nor could they adquately reflect the views of their Governments at pre-session briefings.

13. He underlined that in its resolution 50/11 of 1995, the General Assembly had asked for simultaneous distribution of all language versions of documentation. Moreover, the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council established, in article 13, that, unless the Council decided otherwise, if the documentation relative to an item to be considered had not been communicated in all official languages six weeks prior to the opening of the session, the item could be postponed to the following session. The rules of procedure for the Governing Council of UNDP/UNFPA (the predecessor of the Executive Board) had included the same rule.

14. He thanked the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board secretariat for trying to remedy the situation of late issuance of documents in languages. He recalled that in its decision 94/24 on documentation, which was provisional, the Board had stipulated that while awaiting establishment of rules of procedure for the Executive Board, reports not submitted to Conference Services seven weeks prior to the session (nine weeks for country programmes) be deferred unless an exception was made. While underlining

that his group did wish to be flexible, he emphasized the necessity of having a specific, rigorous examination of the dissemination and distribution of documentation at that stage.

15. The numerous questions relating to the issue could not be fully understood without a precise knowledge of all of its elements. With four sessions per year and the obligation of distributing the documentation six weeks before the beginning of sessions, a rule that was clearly imposed by the sense of General Assembly resolution 50/11, his group recognized that the dissemination of documents in all official languages represented a true obstacle that ought to be surmounted through conducting an appropriate exercise that would critically analyse all dimensions and steps in the production of documentation. In its resolution 50/11, the General Assembly had also severely limited the general practice of issuing "preliminary documents". A better organization of work could allow for improved dissemination of the key Executive Board documentation. Other ideas that his group would like to explore were prioritization of documentation, guidelines for the number of pages, and better discipline on the part of the Board itself in requesting documentation. Moreover, the group should determine measures to deal with the late production of documents. The Francophone Group reserved the right to request a status report on documentation prior to each session.

16. Support was expressed for the statement of the Francophone Group. One delegation noted that the problems elaborated by the Francophone Group were inherent to the United Nations system. He emphasized the disadvantage at informal consultations of delegations who could not get comments from their capitals because the documents were not available in official languages.

17. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/06. Documentation

The Executive Board

1. *Recalls* the importance of strict observance of the resolutions and rules establishing language arrangements for the different bodies and organs of the United Nations, in particular General Assembly resolution 50/11;

2. *Requests* the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund to establish a working group on document distribution issues, in collaboration with the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund, with the participation of the departments concerned and in association with representatives of the linguistic groups;

3. *Requests* the Administrator to submit a report to the Executive Board at its annual session 1996 on the status of this issue and to propose concrete solutions.

19 January 1996

Future sessions

18. The Executive Board agreed to the following schedule of future sessions in 1996, which would take place in New York, except for the annual session, which would be held in Geneva:

Second regular session 1996:	25-29 March 1996
Annual session 1996:	6-17 May 1996
Third regular session 1996:	9-13 September 1996

(Note: 16 May is an official United Nations holiday in Geneva)

19. One delegation asked that a careful cost estimate be undertaken on the venue options of Geneva and New York for the annual session and be presented to the Executive Board before it took a decision on the venue of the annual session 1998. Two delegations, on behalf of others, expressed strong support for maintaining the venue of Geneva for the annual session in alternate years.

20. After some discussion, it was agreed to add an item on "consideration of rules of procedure" to the agenda of the annual session 1996. The venue of future annual sessions would also be taken up under that item.

21. Following requests from a delegation, the item on United Nations Volunteers, scheduled for the second regular session, was deferred to the annual session and a report on the first field visit of 1996 was scheduled for the second regular session 1996.

22. It was also noted that the process of consideration of UNFPA country programmes by the Executive Board would be raised at the second regular session 1996. UNFPA was requested to consult with the relevant parties at UNDP and UNICEF on the issue. It was decided to include an item on a UNFPA mission statement on the agenda for the annual session 1996.

23. The table on allocation of subjects for 1995-1998 was made available to the Executive Board.

24. The Executive Board agreed to the allocation of subjects for its 1996 sessions, included in the annex to overview decision 96/12.

UNDP SEGMENT

II. INITIATIVES FOR CHANGE

25. Introducing the item, the Administrator stated that 1996 would be a year of further important challenges for UNDP. The fifieth anniversary of the United Nations had generated many ideas about the future of development cooperation. The reform of development assistance, the reform and strengthening of the United Nations as a major force for development and the enhancement of the role of UNDP in development were key preoccupations in many quarters.

26. He welcomed the ten new Executive Board members: Belize, Canada, Finland, Madagascar, Malaysia, Netherlands, Romania, Spain, Switzerland, and Ukraine. He also introduced the new Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Resources and External Affairs, Mr. Normand Lauzon, and announced the appointments of Mr. Richard Jolly as Special Adviser to the Administrator with oversight of the Human Development Report, and Ms. Soheyla Chahkar-Farhang as Secretary of the Executive Board.

27. The Administrator went on to review a number of developments arising from the third regular session 1995 of the Executive Board with which UNDP was actively engaged. Citing the new emphasis on poverty eradication in the programme mandate of UNDP, he said UNDP had intensified its plan of analysis and consultation with its partners in order to bring about the sharper focus in its programming. The Bureau for Programme Policy and Support (BPPS) was taking the lead in that initiative. During the current session, BPPS would propose a schedule of informal consultations with the Executive Board to explore various strategies for dealing with the question of greater focus and for addressing poverty eradication from a thematic perspective.

28. The Administrator mentioned recent initiatives taken by UNDP: the transmittal to country offices of the new conceptual framework of UNDP: "From Poverty to Equity: An Empowering and Enabling Strategy", which outlined approaches for addressing the structural causes of poverty; UNDP participation with its United Nations system partners in task forces as part of the integrated follow-up to major United Nations conferences, notably the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit on Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women; the successful organization of recent aid coordination meetings on Angola and Namibia; and the establishment of the Trust Fund to Support Governance in Africa.

29. On organizational issues, the Administrator informed the Executive Board that results from the November 1995 Pledging Conference indicated that funds for 1996 would fall only slightly below the 1995 total of about $950 million. He thanked those Governments that had made strong efforts to maintain or, as in a number of cases, to increase their core contributions. He observed that the 1996-1997 biennial budget had set the financial parameters of the programme of UNDP of cost reduction and restructuring, on which UNDP was moving decisively. The staffing implications of downsizing in such difficult times were being managed with as much deliberation and sensitivity as was humanly possible. He also referred to the new human resources and training

strategy of UNDP, which aimed to modernize personnel management principles and practices in the organization and, through the continuous development of new abilities and skills, to keep UNDP staff at the forefront of the United Nations system of the future.

30. Turning to paragraph 4 of Executive Board decision 95/22, the Administrator summarized developments in the planning process of UNDP following the introduction in June 1995 of a prototype corporate plan. The 1995 plan, he noted, was now under vigorous implementation. Moreover, considerable efforts had been made to institutionalize corporate planning in UNDP and to formulate through extensive internal consultation a representative UNDP mission statement.

31. Stressing that a number of elements contained in document DP/1996/2 were necessarily still at a preliminary stage, he proceeded to highlight the principal proposals of UNDP for the 1996-1997 corporate plan. First, UNDP had arrived at a draft mission statement that aimed to capture the programme mandate given by the Executive Board while also distilling the vision and aspirations of UNDP staff. The comments of the Board on the draft would be welcome. Second, UNDP management considered it vital to synchronize the planning and budgetary cycles in the organization. It was proposed to achieve that synchronization by the start of the 1998-1999 biennium and after that to issue the corporate plan every two years. As a transitional step, the next corporate plan would span the 18-month period from June 1996 to December 1997. Since much in the current corporate plan, which had been introduced just seven months previously, remained highly pertinent, it would remain in effect through the first half of 1996. Third, it was intended to use a logical framework in the next plan, emphasizing corporate objectives, unit-level objectives, key results areas, performance indicators, the regular evaluation of results and the use of incentives to promote success and accountability.

32. Next, it was proposed to tighten up the system in UNDP of monitoring performance under the corporate plan through several measures, including the adoption organization-wide of a uniform work-plan format. Last, through a final round of discussion at the senior-management level, it was intended to complete in February 1996 the final ordering of the corporate priorities and operational objectives tentatively discussed in document DP/1996/2.

33. Twenty-five delegations spoke on the item. Most expressed their interest in, and support for, the various initiatives UNDP had taken in following up on matters arising from the previous session. A number requested further information on specific developments, including the proposed series of informal consultations on the anti-poverty focus of UNDP, the role of UNDP in various new inter-agency task forces and its new human resources strategy.

34. Many delegations commented on the draft UNDP mission statement. While some found it concise in relation to the draft statement prepared by UNFPA, others thought it not concise enough when compared to the draft UNICEF mission statement. Many delegations also said the text should encompass not only the staff of UNDP but all stakeholders, including the Executive Board and participating countries.

35. Many delegations noted that the draft required more refinement with respect to its presentation and wording. The final text should be accessible

to the wider public and should be written to appeal to those not familiar with UNDP or its processes and terminology. Other drafting issues raised included the need to: place greater emphasis on capacity-building; refer to Governments explicitly as the major stakeholders of UNDP; use the term "good" rather than "responsible" governance; mention the neutrality and impartiality of UNDP, eliminate elements of the text that were not of a permanent nature, such as the numbers of UNDP country offices or countries served by UNDP; and capture all the major elements of the programme mandate of UNDP, including aid coordination and support for the resident coordinator function in line with General Assembly resolutions 47/199 and 50/120. One delegation suggested that the parallel structure of the selected extract from the preamble to the United Nations Charter and the first line of the draft mission statement of UNDP was not appropriate.

36. A number of delegations pointed out that the epithet "corporate" had private sector connotations that were inappropriate when applied to the objectives and priorities of an organization such as UNDP. Others observed that the word "corporate" when translated into their languages (French and Spanish) had a quite acceptable meaning. One delegation remarked that what the text omitted also mattered. It was important, for instance, that the statement should recognize that poverty had external dimensions and that UNDP would not limit its anti-poverty focus to domestic causes alone. Moreover, a reference to the key role of economic growth in reducing poverty was essential.

37. Some delegations proposed that, in order to take the process of finalizing the mission statement further, the secretariat should hold an informal meeting with interested Executive Board members.

38. On corporate planning itself and the proposals contained in DP/1996/2, delegations expressed their appreciation for the efforts of UNDP to institutionalize a systematic planning process for managing change. The consultative process UNDP had followed was commendable and the paper offered a good basis for elaborating the 1996-1997 corporate plan. It was important now to move the emphasis from the model to its application and full implementation. The emphasis in the Administrator's statement on results-based management and measurable performance indicators was particularly welcome.

39. The proposed synchronization of the planning and budgetary cycles in UNDP on a biennial basis received widespread support, as did was the suggested time-frame of the next corporate plan (June 1996-December 1997). Several delegations said they were content with the proposed structure of the forthcoming plan, including the set of corporate operational objectives initially identified. Many attached particular importance to objective 1, which related to operationalizing sustainable human development (SHD) with a concentrated focus on poverty eradication. Others considered objective 3, which dealt with constituency-building and mobilizing resources for SHD to hold the key to the future in view of the financial situation of UNDP. A number emphasized that enhancing the resident coordinator function should be pursued in conjunction with other United Nations agencies, in line with the recent triennial policy review of United Nations operational activities and General Assembly resolutions 47/199 and 50/120. A few delegations said that the proposed situational analysis should provide an assessment of the performance of UNDP under the preceding plan and should cite factors

accounting for success or failure. One delegation noted that the preliminary operational objectives in the paper were not hierarchically structured and said that the final plan should rank its operational objectives according to priority.

40. Many delegations underlined that evaluation had not received sufficient attention in document DP/1996/2. Evaluation was central to any assessment of the performance and to its reputation in donor circles. Its role in helping UNDP to become a more efficient and effective organization could not be underestimated. The expansion of evaluation, including the promotion of lessons learned and the design of clear performance measures, should receive prominence as an objective of the 1996-1997 corporate plan, especially in view of Executive Board decision 95/23, in which the Board had decided to increase resources available for the evaluation function in the successor programming arrangements.

41. Responding to the debate, the Administrator thanked delegations for their constructive comments on the draft mission statement and the outline of the next corporate plan. On the general presentation of the draft statement, he said that there were many different types of aims that a mission statement could try to achieve. The purpose of the present draft had been to elicit a statement and a commitment from the staff of UNDP as an exercise in team-building. Concerning some of the language of the statement, he pointed out that, by their nature, the challenges of promoting the new SHD paradigm, supporting the resident coordinator function and helping to synthesize the inputs of sector-based agencies made the mission of UNDP somewhat more complicated than that of its sister organizations. The text of the draft statement could not avoid reflecting some of that complexity. Regarding the use of the word "corporate", the intention was not in any way to reflect the values of a private, profit-oriented entity but simply to describe priorities and objectives that were organization-wide and shared at the highest organizational level.

42. He agreed that Governments were the principal stakeholders of UNDP and should be identified as such. Nor was there any disagreement over the importance of the capacity-building function of UNDP. That was why both those matters appeared in the very first paragraph of the statement. He also agreed that economic growth was an essential engine for eradicating poverty and building equity. He welcomed the desire of the Executive Board to be associated with the final UNDP mission statement, which he took as a compliment to the organization.

43. The issue now was to finalize the draft statement, taking into full account the comments of the Executive Board, without reopening questions that had been resolved in the programme framework, which the Board had already agreed upon. UNDP was acting within that important framework. It had also initiated a major corporate-planning process. Bringing closure to the mission statement should be accomplished in a time-bound manner without holding up implementation of that framework and plan.

44. On the corporate planning process, the Administrator thanked delegations for accepting the proposals of UNDP regarding synchronization with the budget cycle, the time-frame of the next plan and steps to enhance monitoring and the development of clear performance indicators. UNDP would take into account the advice given on particular corporate operational objectives.

45. Concerning evaluation, he said that the lack of emphasis on that function, which many delegations had noticed, was the result of understatement by the Office of Evaluation and Strategic Planning. OESP had in fact been engaged in a vigorous programme of monitoring and evaluation throughout 1995 and had an expanded work programme in its pipeline for 1996-1997. The Executive Board would have an opportunity to review the extent and scope of OESP evaluation activities at its second regular session 1996, when the Office would present its annual report on evaluation. UNDP did not underestimate the significance of the evaluation function, which would be properly reflected in the final corporate plan for 1996-1997.

46. The Executive Board took note of document DP/1996/2 and its proposals regarding the corporate planning process. It was agreed that an informal session on the draft mission statement would be convened prior to the annual session 1996.

III. MATTERS RELATING TO THE PROGRAMMING CYCLES

47. In introducing document DP/1996/3, the Administrator noted that the implementation of the successor programming arrangements approved under Executive Board decision 95/23 required profound and rapid changes to programming processes that had evolved slowly in UNDP over more than two decades. He emphasized that part A of the implementation guidelines, summarized in DP/1996/3, and other guidelines to be issued, should be considered living documents that would be revised in the light of experience. The Administrator also sought further guidance on the preliminary suggestions made in document DP/1996/3 on streamlining the workload associated with the large volume of country cooperation frameworks (CCFs) expected in future regular sessions.

48. The Administrator also introduced document DP/1996/CRP.2 (available in English, French and Spanish), which provided preliminary target for resource assignments from core (TRAC) earmarkings for individual recipient countries under line 1.1.1. The calculations conformed to the provisions of decision 95/23 and were based on the $3.3 billion target for voluntary contributions for 1997 to 1999 established under that decision. He noted that 1994 basic data for some countries were still considered estimates. Therefore, in accordance with past practice, a reserve had been established to accommodate, inter alia, increases in TRAC earmarkings arising from changes to 1994 basic data reported during 1996. Guidelines for the remaining facilities were being prepared and when finalized would be made available to the Executive Board.

49. While sincerely appreciating the commitment of the Executive Board to the $3.3 billion target, the Administrator indicated that for prudent resource management, TRAC earmarkings communicated to resident representatives for initial programme planning purposes would be based on the current estimate of $1 billion in average annual core income. In that it would take major efforts by all parties to reach the original target, the Administrator proposed that a special ad hoc committee be established to assist UNDP in achieving that goal. He noted various initiatives being undertaken to help publicize the concept of UNDP and sustainable human development in a number of donor countries.

50. Many delegations spoke on the item and, in general, commended UNDP for an overall reflection of the spirit and the letter of Executive Board decision 95/23 in the guidelines. A number of delegations, in particular from Eastern European countries, questioned the preliminary earmarkings for TRAC as shown in the conference room paper.

51. With respect to Executive Board involvement in CCF reviews, one delegation suggested that partners at the country level be consulted on the preliminary programme note (PPN) after its review by UNDP and the Government The PPN could also be distributed through headquarters, without formal discussion by the Executive Board. Those consultations at an early stage would reduce the need for the Board to hold lengthy discussions on CCFs, which could be approved on a no-objection basis.

52. Several delegations were sympathetic to the suggestion, noting that the guidelines seemed to allow for country-level consultations on the PPN. A system where the Administrator and the Executive Board members highlighted certain CCFs for discussion, and the majority were dealt with on a no-objection basis, was more practicable where PPNs were discussed informally at an early stage.

53. Many speakers, however, did not concur with the idea of consultation on the PPN at an early stage, since the PPN was an internal UNDP document and the Government did not appear to have an active role in its preparation. While informal consultations with the Government and development partners on the PPN would normally take place at the country level, it was inappropriate to institutionalize the process. Questions were raised concerning the distinction between the PPN and the CCF, the role of the Government, the function of the country strategy note (CSN) in the overall process, and the apparent contradictions between some paragraphs of the summary in document DP/1996/3 and the complete guidelines made available during the session. Several delegations noted that the clarifications later provided by the Administrator (see paragraphs 63-68 below) were acceptable and that the guidelines should be amended accordingly.

54. Other suggestions were made to streamline the workload of the Executive Board *vis-à-vis* the number of CCFs to be approved. Included among them were: a working committee at each regular session to review CCFs, which would recommend some for consideration by the plenary; extended sittings of the Board or an additional regular session each year; inclusion of an executive summary in the CCF; and using 1996 as a trial period in CCF reviews with a determination of future working modalities following that experience.

55. Many speakers agreed that CCFs could be approved on a no-objection basis, with discussion taking place only if requests were made by at least five countries. The Administrator could highlight CCFs on a regional or other representative basis. To reduce the volume of papers coming to the Executive Board, UNDP would need to be flexible in the timing of reviews and restrict the number reviewed per session.

56. There was general agreement that the frameworks presented to the Executive Board for its review should be clear, brief and strategic and should concentrate on overall alignment with programming mandates, thus avoiding any need for the Board to micro-manage the process. Several speakers stressed the need for the Board to take a leading role at the review stage in order to

determine how successful the CCFs had been in achieving desired outcomes. In that connection, some delegations noted that the review mechanisms described in paragraphs 26-29 of document DP/1996/3 should be made more manageable. The system should ensure that the Executive Board had review and evaluation information available in order to consider the outcome and results of the CCF and how that experience could be utilized in future programming. It was recommended that the Board give key consideration to the issue in the future.

57. Several speakers expressed concern over the level of involvement by headquarters and regional bureaux, especially in PPN, CCF and resource assignment reviews. Several speakers requested clarification on the availability of TRAC resources once the CCF had been approved, and questioned the need for the additional review for resource assignment. One delegation was concerned that the process could lead to underprogramming and underdelivery.

58. Clarification was requested on how the rolling financial system could accommodate planning beyond the approved programming period of the CCF, and how the annual release of resources would account for fluctuations in core resources and changes in basic data on gross national product and population.

59. Several speakers affirmed that the criteria for resource assignment were in line with decision 95/23, but underlined the importance of firm application as they were stated very broadly. Key concepts reflected in the criteria must be defined.

60. Several delegations requested clarification on the consistency of the tables contained in the conference room paper, with all provisions of Executive Board decision 95/23, especially regarding the additional resources made available for countries in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. Another delegation requested clarification on the use of World Bank data when a country was not a member of the World Bank.

61. Several delegations emphasized that further consultations on the guidelines could be necessary before they were finalized, but without delay to work at the country level. Flow charts on the procedures would make the document much more user-friendly and logical, and translations into working languages were required as soon as possible.

62. One delegation, in recalling the contribution of his Government for resident coordinator functions, encouraged others to provide such support during the transition to the new arrangements.

63. In responding to issues raised in the discussion, the Administrator expressed appreciation for the helpful comments made and recognized that, for some aspects, the complete guidelines offered clearer explanations than the summary provided in document DP/1996/3. He reiterated that the guidelines, which were being translated into working languages, would be subject to revisions based on the comments of the Executive Board at the present session and in informal consultations held prior to the first regular session, and on the basis of country office feedback on early experience with implementation. As suggested, flow charts would be added to clarify the processes described as well as the evaluation and review processes; the rolling financial framework would also be elaborated. He underlined that, even with the improvements under the successor arrangements, UNDP continued to operate a multi-year

programming system under the constraints of a financial system based on annual contributions.

64. Concerning the preliminary programme note and the country cooperation framework, the Administrator acknowledged that the apparent confusion could have been avoided by retaining the former terminology. He confirmed that the PPN was essentially the former advisory note - an internal document that allowed UNDP to reflect its preliminary thinking on programming possibilities. There was a role for both the national Government and UNDP headquarters review committees in the preparation of the PPN which, by definition, took national priorities into account and involved consultations with the Government and other partners. While the PPN facilitated the initiation of formal dialogue with the Government on the substance of the CCF, it did not predetermine the final content of the CCF, which was a national document. The PPN was not a substitute for the CCF, and if necessary, the guidelines could be amended to provide clarification. He noted that where a CSN existed, the PPN could be derived from that Government-owned document. Although the CSN was not mandatory, there was a clear legislative encouragement to support its preparation.

65 On resource assignment, the Administrator confirmed that upon approval of the CCF by the Executive Board, 60 per cent of TRAC resources would be made available immediately and automatically. The request for resources, described in the summary of the guidelines, made it possible for countries to obtain a higher TRAC assignment at that time if they were ready to do so. Subsequent reviews, however, also permitted countries to seek additional TRAC resources at a later stage. Programming lines 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 resources simultaneously ensured that the assignment criteria were applied uniformly, as specified by the Board in its decision 95/23.

66. The Administrator emphasized that the criteria for assignment adhered to the programming framework established by all members of the Executive Board under the various relevant decisions summarized in annex 1 of document DP/1996/3. He noted that the inclusion of resource mobilization as one of the criteria served to enhance coordination, since UNDP funding could be leveraged to encourage partners to support programming priorities supported by the Executive Board.

67. The Administrator confirmed that the processes set out in the guidelines were expected to lead to greater decentralization. He acknowledged that the PPN, like the former advisory note, was subject to headquarters review. Resource allocation among countries also had to be done centrally and the regional bureaux were in the best position to advise the Administrator on those allocations. Executive Board review of CCFs was also a headquarters-based process. However, once the CCF was approved and TRAC resources were assigned on the basis of programme outlines, then actual implementation could be devolved to a greater degree to the country level.

68. The Administrator reconfirmed that the calculations presented in the conference room paper had been based on all relevant criteria set out in decision 95/23. However, the 0.5 per cent of core resources for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States region - specified in paragraph 19 of that decision - came from outside the TRAC allocations, and therefore, was not included in the table in the conference room paper. Those amounts would be

assigned in consultation with the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. He also confirmed that the procedure undertaken by the UNICEF Executive Board to approve country programmes would be monitored by UNDP.

69. The item was discussed in informal sessions, at which the proposal of the Administrator in document DP/1996/CRP.2 relating to resource mobilization challenges was also considered. The Executive Board took note of the intent of the Administrator to make every effort to achieve the $3.3 billion figure set for planning purposes for 1997-1999, as established in its decision 95/23.

70. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/07. Implementation of the successor programming arrangements

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report contained in document DP/1996/3, of comments made by delegations thereon, and of the clarifications provided by the Administrator during the discussions of the report and requests the Administrator to ensure that the guidelines be in full conformity with those clarifications, which will also be contained in the report of the first regular session 1996, and that the revised guidelines be submitted to the Executive Board as soon as possible, and no later than at the annual session 1996;

2. Reaffirms that the country cooperation framework is the central document in the country programming process and that the recipient Government has the primary responsibility for the formulation of the framework, in consultation with the United Nations Development Programme, as well as for the coordination of all types of external assistance, in order to integrate the assistance effectively into its development process;

3. Stresses the importance it attaches to the mechanisms for coordination at the country level established in General Assembly resolutions 47/199 and 50/120 and reaffirms that the country cooperation framework should be formulated in accordance with those resolutions;

4. Notes that the country cooperation framework should be based on a realistic estimate of income from both core and non-core resources;

5. Requests the Administrator to submit, in a timely manner, the country cooperation framework as formulated by the country concerned, in consultation with the United Nations Development Programme, to the Executive Board for approval. The country cooperation framework should be based on national plans and priorities, country-specific circumstances and lessons learnt from previous cooperation as well as the mandate and programme priorities of the United Nations Development Programme. The country cooperation framework shall outline the overall strategy proposed for United Nations Development Programme cooperation. The country cooperation framework should set measurable targets where possible for the results and impact expected as well as outline management arrangements for execution and implementation, coordination, monitoring and review as well as a resource mobilization strategy and target for all resources managed by the United Nations Development Programme;

6. Decides that country cooperation frameworks shall be approved as submitted, without presentation and discussion, unless at least five members have informed the secretariat in writing before the meeting of their wish to bring a particular country cooperation framework before the Executive Board. The secretariat shall inform all members of the Board of which country cooperation frameworks will be presented to the Board;

7. Requests the Administrator to submit to the Executive Board at its annual session 1996 a proposed format and timing for review reports, based on information generated from the new system for programme monitoring, periodic review and oversight, the actual assignment of resources, available relevant evaluations and the periodic review of the operational activities of every country office, that will enable the Board to review the actual implementation of the country cooperation framework in each country and lessons learnt as part of the preparation for the next country cooperation framework;

8. Decides that the Administrator shall submit the review reports to the Executive Board, highlighting a representative sample of reports covering a range of programmes that are representative in terms of quality and geography. If necessary, the Board will then provide guidance on future programming. The agreed outcome of the Executive Board review should be a fully integrated part of the preparation for the next country cooperation framework;

10. Requests the Administrator to make available to members of the programme, on a regular basis, lists of available reports on periodic reviews and evaluations of country-programme activities;

11. Decides that the arrangements described above shall take immediate effect, except those contained in paragraph 6, which shall take effect in January 1997 and will be reviewed at the annual session 1997 in light of experience gained therefrom, also taking into consideration country-programming arrangements in the United Nations Children's Fund.

19 January 1996

IV. COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS

71. One delegation made a general statement under this item. The speaker cited the disturbing picture presented by the Administrator regarding the mobilization of resources to advance social and economic development in developing countries. He hoped that the international community would work together towards resource mobilization to ensure that the efforts of developing countries were encouraged through both bilateral and multilateral support.

72. He commended UNDP, UNFPA and other United Nations specialized agencies for providing the necessary technical and financial support to ensure that the development efforts and activities of small island states

were realized. His delegation encouraged the international community to take further action to implement the Barbados Programme of Action, which was agreed upon at the United Nations Conference on Small Island Developing Countries. Positive efforts were being made by UNDP, in particular within the Global Environment Facility. UNDP and other organizations were called on to work closely with Governments, regional organizations, and non-governmental organizations to identify priority development areas to achieve a sustainable level of development in island countries. He asked that the Administrator provide information on development activities undertaken by UNDP in accordance with the Barbados Programme of Action.

Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific

73. The Assistant Administrator and Regional Director of the Bureau for Asia and the Pacific introduced the note by the Administrator on assistance to Myanmar (DP/1996/4) and the notes of the Administrator on the extension of the fifth country programme for Fiji (DP/CP/FIJ/5/EXTENSION I) and Tonga (DP/CP/TON/5/EXTENSION I). UNDP sought approval of the activities outlined in document DP/1996/4. He conveyed the request of the Administrator that subparagraph (c) in paragraph 36 of DP/1996/4 be deleted.

74. In general, delegations commended and endorsed the project activities under the human development initiative (HDI) and supported the proposals made by the Administrator for extension of those activities. Concern was expressed about the human rights situation and lack of progress on democracy in Myanmar, and several delegations called for compliance with relevant General Assembly resolutions while others cautioned UNDP against politicizing the development process in Myanmar. Some delegations urged adoption of good governance practices in the country while noting that UNDP activities were clearly focused on the poor, in conformity with Governing Council decision 93/21 on assistance to Myanmar. Those delegations stressed the need for close monitoring and evaluation of project activities and requested that annual reviews on the progress of those activities be reported to the first regular sessions of the Executive Board in 1997 and 1998. They called for continuing mechanisms to ensure that resources allocated to projects reached the identified target groups and worked for capacity-building of national non-governmental organizations.

75. One delegation, while strongly supporting the proposals of the Administrator, expressed regret that there was no opportunity for policy-level interventions for poverty eradication and that UNDP projects were limited to developing micro-models at the grass-roots level. The representative also referred to the geographical scope of operation, with only 14 townships being covered so far and only 20 in the proposed extended phase of the HDI. His delegation stressed the importance of continuing work in the border areas especially to follow up on the work undertaken by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Drug Control Programme. He expressed the intention of his Government to pursue cooperative arrangements with UNDP in the border areas. In that context, he singled out food security and the plan of his Government to supply agricultural machinery and fertilizers to the people in

those areas. He also called for the use of micro-credit facilities for the poor in UNDP projects to enable farmers to purchase agricultural machinery and fertilizers.

76. Several delegations emphasized the need for UNDP to maintain neutrality, universality and non-conditionality. UNDP projects were addressing areas of high-priority humanitarian needs and poverty alleviation. Long-term strategies, programmes and projects were needed to address those needs effectively. A number of delegations hoped that Myanmar would soon revert to status as a programme country.

77. In response to the issues raised by the various delegations, clarifications were provided by the Assistant Administrator and Regional Director of the Bureau for Asia and the Pacific and the Resident Representative in Myanmar. They assured the delegations that the comments and observations made would be taken fully into account in the design and implementation of projects, which would continue to be approved on a project-by-project basis by the Administrator.

78. A final statement was made by the delegation of Myanmar.

79. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/01. Assistance to Myanmar

The Executive Board

1. Approves continued funding of activities in the sectors previously outlined in Governing Council decision 93/21;

2. Authorizes the Administrator, on a project-by-project basis, to approve projects for a total amount not exceeding $52.076 million during the period 1996-1997;

3. Requests the Administrator to submit, at its first regular session 1997 and at its first regular session 1998, an assessment of the extent to which the assistance provided to Myanmar continues to meet the provisions of present Executive Board decisions, including Governing Council decision 93/21.

16 January 1996

Extension of the fifth country programme for Fiji (DP/CP/FIJ/5/EXTENSION I)

80. The Executive Board took note of the extension of the fifth country programme for Fiji (DP/CP/FIJ/5/EXTENSION I).

Extension of the fifth country programme for Tonga (DP/CP/TON/5/EXTENSION I)

81. The Executive Board took note of the extension of the fifth country programme for Tonga (DP/CP/TON/5/EXTENSION I).

First country cooperation framework for Bangladesh (DP/CCF/BGD/1)

82. The Resident Representative in Bangladesh introduced the first country cooperation framework (CCF) for Bangladesh (DP/CCF/BGD/1), informed the Executive Board of the process followed for its preparation, and highlighted major features of the framework. The paramount objective of the CCF for Bangladesh was poverty eradication, with improved environmental management, non-formal employment-generation, advancement of women and improved public management for good governance as subsidiary objectives.

83. The Permanent Secretary of the Economic Relations Division of the Ministry of Finance of Bangladesh, stressed Government ownership of the CCF, which had been developed jointly with UNDP and was in line with national development priorities. He emphasized the need for flexibility in the implementation of the framework and called for the immediate release of resources so that programme development and implementation could proceed without delay.

84. Many delegations expressed satisfaction with the framework, citing its focus on poverty eradication. It was a good example of cooperation at the country level. Clarification was sought on a number of issues, including the need for greater specificity on the comparative advantage of UNDP in responding to the country's needs. Some asked about the importance of an improved public management system, particularly as it related to timely and efficient implementation of aid-financed projects. Others cited the need to pay equal attention to the support of expansion in formal-sector employment in labour-intensive industries. The view was expressed that the relative emphasis on local level versus central-level interventions might need some modification in order to give greater weight to the central level, where UNDP had a traditional comparative advantage. Consideration of support to micro-credits, activities in follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, and governance and elections was also raised. A few delegations asked for clarification regarding action taken to achieve resource mobilization targets, and also about the time frame for availability of lines 1.1.1. and 1.1.2 resources. One delegation noted that the CCF supported the trend of work with non-governmental organizations, which had been very favourable in Bangladesh. A query was raised on the format of the CCF, mainly relating to its length, which exceeded the maximum limit set in the new programming guidelines.

85. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific and the Resident Representative in Bangladesh provided clarifications to the questions. In terms of format, the CCF had been prepared prior to the elaboration of the new guidelines on programming and therefore it should be viewed as a pragmatic response to the situation and not as a precedent in procedural terms. The framework was less specific than the former country programmes as a result of the participatory and bottom-up planning process undertaken for development of the programmes. The major criterion for selection of projects and programmes had been their response to the needs of the deprived segments of the population, as elicited through an open-ended process. Care would be taken to carry out baseline surveys and to put in place solid monitoring mechanisms aimed at measuring the impact of all interventions. The emphasis placed on non-formal employment should not be interpreted as underplaying the importance of formal employment, which was clearly a key element in poverty

eradication. UNDP had not yet received a request to undertake activities in the area of micro-credits.

86 The country office and the Government would adopt a flexible approach in terms of relative allocation of resources to interventions at the central and local levels. The suggested distribution contained in the CCF should be regarded as indicative. The Executive Board was informed that when it approved the CCF, line 1.1.1 could be released and with further programme development line 1.1.2 could become available.

87. In conclusion, the Permanent Secretary of the Economic Relations Division of the Ministry of Finance of Bangladesh, thanked the delegates for their support and assured them that the Government was intent on tackling the issue of administrative reform.

88. The Executive Board approved the first country cooperation framework for Bangladesh (DP/CCF/BGD/1).

Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean

UNDP cooperation with Aruba (DP/1996/5)

89. The Assistant Administrator and Director, Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean introduced the note by the Administrator on UNDP cooperation with Aruba. He stated that in 1986, Aruba had become an autonomous entity within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, with a status identical to that of the Netherlands and the Netherlands Antilles. The first country programme for Aruba, which originally encompassed the years 1987 to 1991, had been extended twice, until the end of 1993. At its third regular session 1994, the Executive Board had authorized the Administrator to approve programmes and projects for Aruba on a case-by-case basis.

90. As a net contributor country since the fourth programming cycle, Aruba financed all programmes with its own resources and external resources to which it had access. The resources available for the programming period under consideration, 1994-1996, amounted to $913,038.

91. UNDP cooperation with the Government of Aruba would concentrate on economic policy and diversification, social development and environmental and natural resources management. Those areas had been identified as the ones in which UNDP had a comparative advantage in terms of expertise, experience and cost when compared with other providers.

92. The Executive Board took note of the note of the Administrator on UNDP cooperation with Aruba (DP/1996/5).

UNDP cooperation with Trinidad and Tobago (DP/1996/6)

93. The Assistant Administrator and Director, Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean introduced the note by the Administrator on UNDP cooperation with Trinidad and Tobago. The programming period under consideration comprised a period of three years, 1994-1996. The fourth

country programme had been extended twice, until the end of 1993. In 1994, the Executive Board had authorized the Administrator to approve programmes and projects for Trinidad and Tobago on a case-by-case basis.

94. As UNDP assistance represented only 0.2 per cent of total multilateral and bilateral assistance to Trinidad and Tobago, the Government had opted to channel UNDP resources into high-leverage, high-impact programmes, in line with the focus of UNDP on sustainable human development.

95. UNDP support concentrated on the improvement of national environmental management and on restructuring the delivery system for social services. In particular, UNDP had sponsored public consultations that would contribute to the formulation and adoption of modern environmental policy and legislation. It had supported the establishment of the Environmental Management Agency, the strengthening of environmental non-governmental organizations and the design and implementation of a comprehensive public education programme on environmental issues.

96. Support from delegations was expressed for the activities of UNDP in Trinidad and Tobago, citing in particular the focus on improving environmental management and the delivery of social services. Assistance to non-governmental organizations was also appreciated. One delegation praised the mention in paragraph 12 of document DP/1996/6 of the significance of the UNDP contribution in the design of a participatory approach to social development that could serve as a model for countries at a similarly high stage of development.

97. The representative of Trinidad and Tobago noted the good relationship between his Government and UNDP. There had been a positive impact on poverty alleviation resulting from cooperation with UNDP. National elections in his country in November 1995 had resulted in a new Government, which was in the process of debating its first budget in Parliament. As a result, he noted that the country cooperation framework for Trinidad and Tobago, originally expected to be before the Executive Board at its third regular session 1996, would possibly be delayed.

98. The Executive Board took note of the note of the Administrator on UNDP cooperation with Trinidad and Tobago (DP/1996/6).

Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States

Independence bonus for Slovakia

99. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Resources and External Affairs recalled that at its third regular session 1995, the Executive Board had considered the eligibility of an independence bonus for several UNDP programme countries. The annex to Board decision 95/26 contained a list of 15 countries eligible for an independence bonus.

100. At the third regular session 1995, Slovakia had requested that its eligibility for an independence bonus be determined. In response, UNDP had requested an opinion from the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs. The opinion confirmed that Slovakia was a newly independent state and thus met

the indispensable legal precondition of eligibility to receive an independence bonus. Accordingly, UNDP would add Slovakia to the list of countries eligible for an independence bonus, as listed in the annex to Executive Board decision 95/26.

101. The Executive Board took note of the statement of the Assistant Administrator.

Assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina

102. The representative of Slovakia introduced a draft decision, co-sponsored by Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Malaysia, Morocco, Slovakia and the United States, on assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Following the recent peace agreement, there was an urgent need to create conditions conducive to its implementation. Military assistance should go hand in hand with development assistance, reconstruction and rehabilitation in the war-striken country. The assistance of the United Nations, in particular through UNDP in its leading role, was essential. In order to expedite reconstruction and rehabilitation, which were interlinked with the implementation of the annexes of the Dayton agreement concerning fair elections and the return of refugees, the establishment of a UNDP office in Sarajevo was of paramount importance. In that regard, the draft decision proposed that additional funding be allocated to Bosnia and Herzegovina for programmes to facilitate the resettlement and reintegration of the displaced population and other reconstruction and rehabilitation operations.

103. The Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina noted that while UNDP had not been previously directly involved in his country, it was crucial, now that the peace agreements had been concluded, that UNDP serve as a development partner in re-building the war-torn country. Bosnia and Herzegovina now belonged to the lowest scale of least developed countries, with no gross national product measured during the past four years. Reconstruction must be swift, he urged, and UNDP could play a vital role in coordination in that effort. A Standard Basic Agreement had been signed with UNDP following the recent visit of a UNDP team to Sarajevo. He hoped that the Executive Board would agree to establish a country office in Sarajevo.

104. All delegations taking the floor expressed full support for the need for UNDP to have a role in the reconstruction of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Many speakers supported vigorously the opening of a UNDP office in Sarajavo and funding of $5 million for a programme in the country. It was clear that while it was a relatively small amount, UNDP could be instrumental in coordinating funding from other donors. Several delegations enquired as to whether the funding could be obtained through line 1.1.3, which was meant for countries in special circumstances, approved by the Executive Board in its decision 95/23. One delegation noted that the activities of UNDP in Bosnia and Herzegovina would enable UNDP to fulfil its role of in post-crisis situations; lessons learned could be reported to the Board.

105. Additional details about the role of UNDP assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina were requested. Several Executive Board members also asked if there would be overlap with the activities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. One delegation suggested that the proposed office could be called the "United Nations field office for development".

106. One delegation, while supporting UNDP assistance to the reconstruction of the country, questioned the necessity of approval by the Executive Board of a decision of such a nature, asking whether it was in violation of the rules and regulations of the Board, inter alia, whether the Board should avoid political discussions and micro-management of UNDP. The delegation emphasized that the Board should therefore avoid approval of funding for isolated cases of special situations. The approval of a new country office should be decided upon within the normal budget procedures of UNDP. Furthermore, the Administrator could use available funds approved by the Board for the fifth cycle. The decision to borrow against budget line 1.1.3 (special cases) of the new programming system should remain with the Administrator The delegation also proposed coordination and cooperation within the United Nation system and with other donors and asked whether UNDP planned a round-table meeting for Bosnia. Several delegations supported the proposal to take a formal decision, which in their view did not involve micro-management.

107 The Assistant Administrator and Regional Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States stated that UNDP had taken immediate action following the peace agreement, sending a five-person mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina to explore the possibility of establishing a UNDP office in Sarajevo. Extensive consultations with other parts of the United Nations system were conducted, including UNHCR, which was pleased to learn of the intended actions of UNDP. He pointed out that the $5 million was seed money that would be used to create an umbrella facility to coordinate consultancies in the country. It would also be used to support governance at the local level and for institution-building in areas of UNDP comparative advantage. At the present time, only $200,000, from the fifth cycle indicative planning figure, was available for programming in the country. A round-table meeting for Bosnia was not currently planned and would depend on the overall resource mobilization situation.

108. The Associate Administrator explained that use of line 1.1.3 meant getting an advance against funds that would be available in 1997, when the successor programming arrangements came into effect. The Administrator was already in the process of establishing a presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and of giving consideration to funding for the programme in the country, including through the use of 1.1.3. Furthermore, he stated that a formal decision of the Board was not necessary but that it would be desirable.

109. The Executive Board approved the following decision:

96/11. UNDP Assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Executive Board

1. Takes into account the recent peace agreements, which foresaw the urgent need to undertake massive reconstruction and rehabilitation activities, as well as the urgent need to restart the development process in Bosnia and Herzegovina;

2. Emphasizes the importance of the creation of conditions conducive to the reconstruction and development of Bosnia and Herzegovina and encourages Member States to provide assistance;

3. Takes note of the request from the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina to receive necessary assistance from the United Nations Development Programme at this critical juncture;

4. Welcomes the intention of the Administrator to earmark additional funds for programming activities in 1996; and recommends that the amount should be at least $5 million, and that these funds, to the extent possible, should come from available unprogrammed Special Programme Resources. They are to be utilized for programmes developed by the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina in consultation with the United Nations Development Programme;

5. Recommends that, if necessary, additional funds may be allocated by borrowing against line 1.1.3: resources for development in countries in special circumstances. Such action shall not be regarded as a precedent for similar country-specific allocations, which will be based in the future on guidelines being developed for the use of this facility;

6. Welcomes the decision of the Administrator to establish a United Nations Development Programme country office in Bosnia and Herzegovina as soon as possible;

7. Further requests the Administrator to report on the progress of the implementation of the present decision at the second regular session 1996.

19 January 1996

V. INTER-AGENCY PROCUREMENT SERVICES OFFICE

110. The Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Finance and Administration, introduced document DP/1996/7 on the activities of the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office (IAPSO) in the context of its two basic mandates: (a) research and development activities in support of the inter-agency role of IAPSO; and (b) the provision of services, including advisory, training and direct procurement, for UNDP, the United Nations system, and the development community.

111. The Assistant Administrator also indicated that the activities and role of IAPSO had recently been reviewed as part of the budget strategy for the 1996-1997 biennium, incorporating recommendations of the United Nations Board of Auditors. With regard to the Office's research and development activities, the Assistant Administrator highlighted that IAPSO was exploring ways by which some of those activities could become self-financing, while keeping a small core capacity to support its inter-agency role. On the direct procurement services offered by IAPSO to the United Nations system and the development community, he indicated that those activities, initiated in 1985 following a decision by the Administrator and in line with the mandate given by the Governing Council, had grown significantly and had become a main source of extrabudgetary income for IAPSO. The Assistant Administrator emphasized that UNDP saw a continuing demand and growth potential in the future for those

services. For that reason, UNDP was seeking from the Executive Board the reaffirmation of the mandates of IAPSO and the endorsement to continue with those activities.

112. The Assistant Administrator requested confirmation from the Executive Board of its decision 95/28, paragraphs 41 and 42, on the IAPSO budget strategy for 1996-1997, which had been provisional pending review of IAPSO activities at the current session. He indicated that the Administrator proposed to consolidate the reporting on IAPSO activities and procurement statistics in a biennial report to be submitted at the third regular session 1996. The Assistant Administrator also reported that IAPSO was exploring possibilities of cooperation with other United Nations organizations, such as the United Nations Office for Project Services. He invited delegates to visit a IAPSO exhibit located in the conference room.

113. Several delegations expressed satisfaction with the report of the Administrator on IAPSO and supported the proposals made by the Administrator, in particular the efforts of IAPSO to make some of its activities self-financing, the continuation of direct procurement activities and the biennial reporting to the Board. Some delegations commended in particular the efforts made by IAPSO in promoting procurement from developing countries and recommended that those activities be increased. In response to an enquiry on the utilization of accumulated unencumbered income for 1995, the Assistant Administrator explained that the budget strategy for IAPSO had been based on the utilization of accumulated unspent income to finance some activities of IAPSO under the extrabudgetary account. The unspent income would also be used to set up a fund against contingencies and risks. One delegation asked for a summary of the United Nations Board of Auditors recommendations with regard to the audit of IAPSO. The Assistant Administrator indicated that the reaffirmation of the mandates of IAPSO, the strengthening of information systems, the provision of a fund for contingencies, and the separate disclosure of IAPSO activities in the UNDP financial statements were among the actions recommended by the Board of Auditors. In response to a question about the effective date of the re-classification for the level of the post for the Director, IAPSO, the Assistant Administrator confirmed that it would be effective for the 1996-1997 budget.

114. In response to questions by some delegations about IAPSO activities in coordinated procurement with other United Nations agencies, the Director of IAPSO indicated that initiatives to date had included work on standardization, drawing on the joint capacities and expertise of each of the agencies concerned.

115. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/02. Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office (IAPSO)

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the Administrator on the activities of the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office (DP/1996/7) and expresses appreciation for the important inter-agency cooperation work undertaken by the Office within the framework of the Inter-Agency Procurement Working Group, which has proven to have an important impact on programme deliveries, economy of operations and transparency in the use of public funds;

2. Reaffirms that under its mandate for research and development on procurement-related matters for the United Nations system, the Inter-Agency Procurement Office shall continue to promote inter-agency cooperation and coordination, where possible finding ways of making such activities self-financing;

3. Also reaffirms that, under its mandate for procurement services, the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office shall continue to provide a full range of such procurement services to the organizations of the United Nations system and to partners in development outside the United Nations system, including non-governmental organizations, Governments and government agencies, building upon the capacity it has developed in common-user items, as defined by the Inter-Agency Procurement Working Group, and other product groups for which the Administrator shall determine that the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office has the requisite capacity;

4. Encourages the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office to seek ways of coordinated procurement arrangements with United Nations entities to draw on respective strengths of each entity and thus provide better services to the development community, and in particular to programme countries;

5. Requests the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office to present a consolidated biennial report to the Executive Board on its activities, including direct procurement, and to provide a full statistical report on United Nations system procurement at its third regular session 1996;

6. Confirms paragraphs 41 to 43 of its decision 95/28 with regard to the 1996-1997 biennial budget for Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office, including the modified staffing table and revised grade structures of IAPSO.

17 January 1996

VI. UNITED NATIONS TECHNICAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES

116. The Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Development Support and Management Services (DDSMS) introduced the report of the Secretary-General on United Nations technical cooperation activities (DP/1996/8). He noted that the responsibilities assigned to DDSMS by the General Assembly were designed to sharpen the focus and enhance the impact of technical cooperation activities undertaken by the United Nations. The Department was engaged in substantive work and support to technical cooperation in public administration and development management, energy and the environment, and assistance to countries in crisis.

117. The Under-Secretary-General presented an overview of DDSMS activities and funding arrangements. He noted that the Department was the substantive secretariat for an item to be taken up at the resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly on public administration and development. Pursuant to Executive Board decision 94/27 on United Nations technical cooperation activities, in which the Executive Board had urged UNDP to consider greater utilization of the technical capacities of the Department, collaboration with UNDP had increased. That collaboration was reflected in a series of senior management and working-level meetings and increased UNDP funding of DDSMS substantive work. Also, UNDP, DDSMS and the United Nations Nations Office of Project Services (UNOPS) were strengthening their relations in the context of the UNOPS Management Coordination Committee. An early focus was division of labour among the three entities in post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation.

118. Several delegations requested more details on the level of collaboration between DDSMS and UNDP in areas of common concern, and on the comparative advantage of DDSMS activities, so as to avoid duplication of functions and to ensure efficient use of resources. Some stated that many of the activities described in the document were already being undertaken by UNDP or other United Nations organizations. One delegation queried whether the planned activities might not be too ambitious.

119. Further information on the division of labour among UNDP, UNOPS and DDSMS in reconstruction and rehabilitation of war-torn societies was requested. One delegation expressed appreciation for the high quality of the Department's work in technical cooperation, and in particular for its work in preparations for discussions at the resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly on public administration and development. One speaker asked for more information on linkages between DDSMS, UNDP and recipient Governments at the country level.

120. One delegation asked for more information on trends in funding and expenditure. Other speakers queried whether UNDP would undertake an evaluation, including a value-for-money audit, on the DDSMS activities it financed.

121. Noting the draft decision included in document DP/1996/8, one delegation suggested that paragraphs 3 and 4 could be deleted as they referred to activities already undertaken by DDSMS, and that reference to a UNDP evaluation of the Department's work should be included.

122. The Under-Secretary-General stated that the Department's relation to UNDP was similar to that of the specialized agencies, in particular that it was engaged through UNDP funding, and at the request of Governments, to provide expertise in specific fields. Total project expenditures by DDSMS were declining, owing to the rise of national execution of projects, the decreased involvement of DDSMS in project implementation and the decline of UNDP resources. However, the Department was moving upstream, as intended by the Executive Board, and was increasingly engaged in UNDP-funded actions by United Nations agencies for technical support at the programme and project levels. The Department was not duplicating activities already being undertaken by UNDP since there was complementarity based on a functional division of labour. The UNDP/DDSMS/UNOPS paper on post-conflict reconstruction had been circulated in draft among members of the UNOPS Management Coordination Committee and should soon be available to interested delegations. DDSMS was closely linked to UNDP and Governments at the country level. He noted that UNDP-funded project activities of DDSMS were subject to evaluation by UNDP, and were carried out with the full involvement of UNDP country offices and national Governments.

123 The Administrator stated that DDSMS and UNDP cooperated very well. The paper on post-conflict reconstruction had been a genuine collaborative effort of UNDP, UNOPS and DDSMS.

124. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/04. United Nations technical cooperation activities

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General (DP/1996/8);

2. Invites the Department for Development Support and Management Services, the United Nations Development Programme and other United Nations entities and departments to give further attention to strengthened programmatic linkages within their respective mandates;

3. Recommends that the United Nations Development Programme consider including in its evaluation work plan an evaluation of the activities of the Department for Development Support and Management Services that it finances, including a value-for-money audit.

19 January 1996

VII. UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN

125. The Associate Administrator introduced the item, which covered the financial and managerial issues facing the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), and gave an update on the status of the UNIFEM external evaluation of the Fund. The evaluation would provide an input into ensuring that UNIFEM was strategically positioned to play the major role called for by the Fourth World Conference on Women.

126. Aggressive management measures and vigorous resource mobilization had resulted in great strides by UNIFEM in recovering from its financial problems of 1995. The Fund had ended the year 1995 with an estimated $3.9 million balance in general resources, without UNIFEM having to make use of the overdraft facility from UNDP. The Associate Administrator expressed the appreciation of UNDP for the constructive concern of the Executive Board and for the increased financial contribution of several donors. Board support had ensured that UNIFEM remained a strong and viable organization for promoting the advancement of women. A rigorous review of UNIFEM finances would be maintained through the monthly meetings convened by the Associate Administrator, as would in-depth quarterly reviews by the UNDP Bureau for Finance and Administration. UNDP would continue to provide UNIFEM with the services of an outposted finance officer to assist them in ensuring that strict financial reporting was carried out in a timely manner.

127. The Administrator had been cooperating closely with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) to launch the in-depth evaluation of UNIFEM programmes. The evaluation would provide an important opportunity to review UNIFEM performance and ensure that its programmes were strategically focused.

128. In November 1995, the Administrator had transmitted to all Executive Board members a project document and finalized terms of reference for the evaluation. He then requested the Executive Director of UNOPS to select a team of consultants on an international competitive basis to undertake the review. Proposals had been solicited from a short list of ten entities that included organizations from both donor and developing countries, with the exclusion of those that had done significant work with UNIFEM in the past. An expert on gender issues had worked closely with UNOPS in the evaluation of proposals received. UNOPS was expected to conclude contract negotiations by the end of January 1996 with the designated entity.

129. The UNIFEM evaluation would be launched in mid-February 1996, with visits to countries in each region where UNIFEM programmes were in place. In Africa, the review would be conducted in French-and English-speaking countries. A final evaluation report would be submitted at the third regular session 1996.

130. The Administrator had established a trust fund for the evaluation and had sent a copy of the document to all Executive Board members to facilitate pledging. Out of the total evaluation budget of $289,999, Member States had pledged $235,000 and UNDP had received $197,000, for which UNDP was grateful. Other countries were urged to contribute.

131. As a result of issues raised by the UNIFEM situation and in an effort to respond fully to the concerns of the Executive Board regarding accountability and responsibility, in pursuance of Board decision 95/32, the Administrator had launched a review, with a team of outside experts, of UNDP mechanisms for ensuring managerial, financial and programme accountability. Its primary purpose was to look at the existing mechanisms in UNDP in order to rationalize them and identify any gaps. The review team would meet with the United Nations Secretariat and United Nations funds and agencies to ensure consistency. Specific attention would be given to linking managerial, programme and financial accountability with the performance appraisal review process for senior managers. A report would be prepared on the issue for Board review at an informal session to be held by early May 1996. The formal presentation to the Board would take place at the third regular session 1996.

132. The Associate Administrator underlined the importance of the maintenance of the highest standards of accountability in UNDP. On behalf of the Administrator and himself, he assured the Executive Board that it would be a personal and organizational priority in 1996.

133. The Director of UNIFEM informed the Executive Board that during 1995, as a result of careful management, projected expenditures had been limited to $12.86 million. Contributions to general resources had increased to $15.011 million, through the generosity of donors. That amount did not include 1995 pledges, which would be received in early 1996 and which would be included in expected income for 1996. Estimates of the general resource balance of UNIFEM as of 31 December 1995 stood at $3.90 million.

134. The increase in contributions to general resources was partially owing to one-time special contributions by Governments. Fourteen Governments had also increased their contributions in 1995, and there had been an increase in the number of contributors, thanks to a concerted effort on the part of UNIFEM to increase its resource base. The trend of increasing contributions was continuing in 1996, as was the addition of new donors. The Pledging Conference in November 1995 had resulted in $5.71 million in firm pledges from 30 countries, an increase of $1.52 million over pledges made at the previous year's Pledging Conference, and an addition of 13 countries making pledges. When combined with informal contacts with donors who had not yet pledged, indications were that UNIFEM could expect to receive an estimated $12.45 million from 56 donor countries in 1996. Moreover, UNIFEM had received $.450 million in private contributions from its national committees, foundations and private individuals in 1995, much of it contributed to specific projects and therefore not shown in the general resources account.

135. The written statement of the Executive Director was distributed. It included tables showing UNIFEM general resources projections as presented to the Executive Board at its annual session 1995 (DP/1995/33, table 3) and preliminary projections as at 31 December 1995. Project expenditures in 1995 were now estimated at $9.75 million, with administrative and technical costs in 1995 totalling $3.1 million.

136. The Director gave the Executive Board an overview of the planned programme of UNIFEM following the Fourth World Conference on Women. The Beijing Platform for Action had provided a strong endorsement of the mission,

policy framework, and strategies of UNIFEM. The new programming focus of UNIFEM was on the economic and political empowerment of women, areas which would build on the Fund's comparative advantage. Projects that contributed to the implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action would be within the $4 million authorized by the Board in its decision 95/18. She noted that even taking into account that amount, a surplus of over $5 million was projected for UNIFEM at the end of 1996.

137. It was not yet possible to provide a firm calculation of the notional operational reserve, as all information on actual 1995 expenditures was not yet available. However, the best estimate for the notional operational reserve for 1997-1999 was $1.3 million. UNIFEM therefore requested the Executive Board to authorize the Fund to initiate another $2 million of new projects in 1996, an action that would not jeopardize the stability of the Fund. It would provide UNIFEM with the resources needed to respond more effectively to the empowerment of women in developing countries following the Fourth World Conference on Women.

138. UNIFEM would work with national Governments to assist in the preparation of national action plans for the implementation of the Platform of Action. It would empower women to participate effectively in the implementation of the conference outcomes, support women's organizations and provide technical support to the resident coordinator system in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. The Fund had convened its annual strategic planning workshop in January 1996 in order to operationalize its programme directions. They looked forward to the external evaluation of UNIFEM as an opportunity for in-depth review of its programmes and procedures.

139. While some delegations underlined their appreciation of the work of UNIFEM and expressed support for approval by the Executive Board of $2 million for new activities, others were reluctant to endorse the amount without details on how the monies would be used or before having the results of the external evaluation of the Fund. More information on the intended programmes was needed. It was confirmed that the $2 million did not appear in table B of the Executive Director's statement.

140. Some concern was expressed that the report on accountability called for in decision 95/32 would not be available until the third regular session 1996. The Associate Administrator explained that UNDP was taking advantage of the request of the Executive Board to undertake an expanded review of accountability that would go beyond what the Board had requested. UNDP would be examining issues in connection with programme, managerial and financial accountability. An external team would carry out the review and issue a draft report in March 1996. The major findings of that report would be discussed in an informal meeting of the Board to be convened in May 1996. The Administrator's report on accountability would be reviewed by the Board at its third regular session 1996.

141. The Executive Director of UNIFEM explained that the resource base for empowerment of women was very small and that many developing countries relied on UNIFEM to assist in the implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action. It was important that the momentum of processes at the field level not be lost. The $2 million in new projects would be used for activities in the areas of women's economic and political empowerment, especially in reducing

the feminization of poverty, in building women's leadership, in natural resources management, on issues of governance and in eliminating all forms of violence against women. It was imperative that the Executive Board respond quickly.

142. One delegation requested that the Director of UNIFEM inform the Executive Board on the intended use of the additional funding prior to approval of the draft decision. The Director responded that a list of projects and ideas for use of the funding was available to the Board.

143. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/08. United Nations Development Fund for Women

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* with appreciation of the information provided by the Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women regarding the improvement of the financial situation of the Fund;

2. *Authorizes* the United Nations Development Fund for Women, on an exceptional basis in view of the positive balance of resources, to formulate additional new projects in 1996 for a total amount not exceeding $2 million;

3. *Requests* that the United Nations Development Fund for Women in future submit in writing to the Executive Board, in accordance with the established rules for the submission of documentation, all proposals requiring action by the Board.

19 January 1996

VIII. UNDP/UNFPA: FOLLOW-UP TO AND PREPARATIONS FOR THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

United Nations Development Programme

144. The Associate Administrator introduced the note by the Administrator on the follow-up to and preparation for the Economic and Social Council (DP/1996/9). The document contained information on activities undertaken or planned by UNDP to implement the main recommendations of Council resolutions 1995/50 and 1995/51. A more detailed report on the follow-up would be available at the annual session 1996. He noted in particular that the report included information on priorities for UNDP assistance, follow-up to international conferences, and monitoring and evaluation.

145 The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support informed the Executive Board of a series of informal consultations during February and March 1996 on the thematic priorities of UNDP. A schedule for the consultations was distributed to the Executive Board. Also, given the postponement of the joint UNDP/UNFPA agenda item on the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS to the second regular session 1996, the Assistant Administrator announced the availability of a statement by UNDP on the topic.

146. One delegation, supported by others, urged both UNDP and UNFPA to provide full details in a future report on the effectiveness of country and intercountry programmes in order to show that funding was being used appropriately. More information on problems faced by the organizations in responding to Economic and Social Council resolutions was asked for, to enable the Executive Board to provide better guidance in preparation for the 1996 session of the Council. Issues relating to coordination in the field were of particular relevance. More specific information on implementation by UNDP of the outcomes of the recent major international conferences was also sought.

147. In the follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/56 on the coordination of humanitarian assistance, UNDP was asked to provide information on the role of the resident coordinator in crises, coordination of appeals, the relation of the round-table mechanism to consolidated appeals by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, overlap with other United Nations organizations in specific activities and on the resource situation of its emergency response division.

148. Noting the difference in format with a similar report prepared by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), a request was made for UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF to discuss the exercise, with a view to preparing more comparable reports.

149. Several delegations pointed out that the reference in paragraph 3 of document DP/1996/9 to Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/51 was incorrect as it stood ("the Economic and Social Council requests funds and

programmes to give high priority in their budgets to least developed countries, low-income countries and countries in transition") and should be amended as follows: "In its resolution 1995/51, the Economic and Social Council requests funds and programmes ... to continue to give high priority in their budget allocations to least developed countries, low-income countries and Africa"; the resolution also requests the United Nations funds and programmes "to take into account the specific needs and requirements of countries with economies in transition".

150. In answer to the questions raised, the Assistant Administrator stated that UNDP hoped to build more capacity in the emergency response area and confirmed that UNDP would quote the relevant paragraphs of Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/51 in future references to priorities for UNDP assistance.

United Nations Population Fund

151. In his introduction, the Deputy Executive Director for Policy and Administration explained that document DP/FPA/1996/6 was designed to provide preliminary information on how UNFPA planned to report on ECOSOC resolutions 1995/50, 1995/51 and 1995/56. He emphasized those aspects relating to increased cooperation and coordination among the United Nations funds and programmes, including progress in the harmonization of programme cycles and increasing numbers of joint presentations of country programmes. In this context, the Deputy Executive Director also highlighted a new initiative of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) for the development of joint information systems and situational analyses at the country level.

152. One delegation noted favourably UNFPA's comments on harmonization efforts and on the linkages between UNFPA's strategy development exercises and the Country Strategy Notes. Similarly, the work of UNFPA in emergency humanitarian assistance was commended. However, the delegation expressed concern about the lack of more precise information from UNFPA regarding the cost-effectiveness of administrative services.

153. The Deputy Executive Director thanked the Executive Board for the valuable suggestions and noted his agreement with the need for coordination and comparability in the reporting to ECOSOC. He informed the Board that discussions on this matter had been held at the last JCGP General Meeting in December 1995 and resulted in the establishment of a working group to ensure the necessary coordination. He also stressed that UNFPA would ensure the inclusion of more specific information on the cost-effectiveness of administrative services in its report to ECOSOC.

154. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/05. Preparation of reports for the Economic and Social Council substantive session 1996

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme contained in document DP/1996/9, and of the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Population

Fund contained in document DP/FPA/1996/6, and the comments made thereon;

2. Urges the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund to ensure that their reports to the Economic and Social Council substantive session 1996 fully address issues to be discussed in accordance with relevant decisions and resolutions of the Council and the General Assembly, including Council resolutions 1995/50, 1995/51 and 1995/56 and General Assembly resolution 50/120;

3. Requests that the content of the reports of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund for the Economic and Social Council substantive session 1996 be such as to enable the Council to compare achievements made by each organization and to identify problems and recommend appropriate actions, on issues relating to, inter alia, allocation of resources, harmonization of procedures and budget presentation, common administrative services and premises and monitoring and evaluation;

4. Requests the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, together with the Executive Directors of the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme, to agree on a common format and structure for their reports for the Economic and Social Council substantive session 1996, taking into account paragraph 2 of the present decision.

19 January 1996

IX. UNDP/UNFPA: JOINT AND CO-SPONSORED UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON HIV/AIDS

155. The Executive Board decided to postpone consideration of the item to the second regular session 1996.

156. The Executive Director of UNFPA provided the Executive Board with a brief update of some developments of concern to UNFPA since the last session of the Board. She said that the income forecast for 1996 was relatively positive and thanked the major donors of UNFPA for their continuing strong support. She noted that the implementation of agreements reached at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) had definitely started at the country level and that notable progress had been made in a number of countries. For its part, UNFPA had earnestly assisted countries in implementing the ICPD in the areas of the Fund's mandate, guided by the new programme directions endorsed by the Board in its decision 95/15.

157. The Executive Director said that UNFPA had closely followed the General Assembly discussion on the triennial policy review and was fully committed to implementing the resulting resolution 50/120. She reiterated that UNFPA had always strongly supported, and continued to participate in, the resident coordinator system, and it was with full, continued respect and active support for such principles that the Fund had sought a change in the designation of the UNFPA Country Director as UNFPA Representative. She was pleased that the General Assembly had endorsed the change on 20 December 1995, since it would greatly facilitate the effectiveness of UNFPA in the field.

158. The Executive Director stated that UNFPA had prepared a mission statement based on document DP/1995/25 and the discussions that had taken place at the annual session 1995 of the Executive Board. The statement had been circulated to members of the Board. She noted that several delegations had recommended the one-page UNICEF mission statement as an excellent model. UNFPA would prepare a mission statement along similar lines and present it to the Board for its consideration at the annual session 1996.

159. In accordance with paragraph 4 of Executive Board decision 95/35, the Executive Director reported to the Board on possible measures to reduce further the appropriations for the UNFPA headquarters administrative and programme support services (APSS) budget by approximately $0.5 million. The measures would bring the volume reduction of the 1996-1997 headquarters budget from 1.2 per cent, as proposed in the budget proposal submitted to the Board at its third regular session 1995, to 2 per cent, as called for in decision 95/35. She said that the reduction would mainly be achieved by scaling down some administrative requirements, such as external printing, communications, maintenance of premises and equipment, and office supplies, and by postponing the replacement of office furniture and equipment. She said that the respective appropriations of the budget would be amended accordingly and reassured the Board that UNFPA intended to keep close track of budgetary expenditures in order to run the Fund's operations in the most efficient and economical manner.

X. STRATEGY FOR ALLOCATION OF UNFPA RESOURCES

160. The Executive Director introduced the report on a new approach for the allocation of UNFPA resources to country programmes (document DP/FPA/1996/1). She noted the importance and urgency of putting in place a new system for allocating the Fund's programming resources in order to reflect the new

priorities given to the Fund by the Executive Board in response to the recommendations of the ICPD. The new approach being presented to the Board was the result of much analysis within UNFPA and took into account the suggestions of the Executive Board both in its official deliberations and in informal consultations held periodically during 1995. In particular, the paper built on the report "Programme priorities and future directions of UNFPA in light of the International Conference on Population and Development" (DP/1995/25 and Corr. 1) submitted to the Executive Board at its annual session 1995.

161. The Executive Director stated that the basis for the new approach was the continuum of needs of countries for assistance and the progress that countries had made in population matters. The new approach took into account the major goals of the ICPD Programme of Action - access to reproductive health and family planning services, mortality reduction and universal basic education - and sought to measure them through seven indicators. The selected indicators had the merit of being widely available from official United Nations sources. Countries were categorized into three groups based on the number of threshold levels of the indicators they had met. Two options were presented in the report. Option I used income (gross national product (GNP) per capita) as a defining criterion along with the degree of attainment of ICPD goals according to the seven chosen indicators. Option II used only the number of threshold levels of the indicators met by a country in determining its placement. The Executive Director recommended the adoption of option II since it placed primacy of consideration on the attainment of the goals of the ICPD.

162. Numerous delegations welcomed the report and commended its thoroughness and the clarity with which it presented the proposed new approach for resource allocations. Many expressed a wide agreement with an approach that took the major goals enunciated by the ICPD as its point of departure. Several delegations also praised the incorporation into the report of two options, noting that it was something that Executive Board members had often asked for in the past and that it reflected suggestions made in informal consultations.

163. Many delegations referred to the seven indicators and their threshold levels. There was wide agreement that the indicators were adequate measurements of the ICPD goals although some delegations noted that a few of the indicators were not perfect proxies for the underlying goals. They were of the opinion, nonetheless, that the indicators were the best currently available for all countries. Numerous delegations also noted the appropriateness of the indicators threshold levels as presented in the report.

164. Many delegations noted with approval that, in the allocation proposal, the least developed countries (LDCs) would be accorded the priority recognized for them in the ICPD Programme of Action. A number of delegations also commended the specific provision in the proposed approach for allocations of resources to countries with economies in transition on a temporary basis. While most of those temporary resources would focus on needs in the central Asia and Kazakstan subregion, one delegation mentioned that some east European countries with economies in transition also needed temporary assistance in specific thematic areas. At the same time, several other delegations underscored the desirability of including in the report a confirmation of the need for special consideration for the countries of sub-Saharan Africa, given the severe economic circumstances of that region.

165. A large number of delegations preferred option II of the report as the better procedure for grouping countries, but many of them indicated that they would not be adverse to endorsing option I. On the other hand, several delegations preferred option I, citing the need to take the economic circumstances of the recipient countries into account through use of GNP per capita as a criterion. On the appropriateness of GNP per capita as an indicator, the opinion of delegations varied: some felt that it was a necessary element in resource allocations to assure that the neediest countries received greater consideration. Other delegations noted that GNP per capita was a poor and sometimes biased measure of human development and that its use would divert attention away from the new agenda emerging from the ICPD.

166 The share of resources of the proposed groupings (groups A, B and C) produced a variety of opinions among the delegations. A few delegations felt that, on a per capita basis, the share for group A countries - those furthest from meeting the ICPD goals - should be higher than the percentages recommended in the report. A number of other delegations, however, noted that overloading resources to group A would create the risk of undermining gains made by other countries in groups B and C and could conceivably contribute to some countries regressing in terms of the ICPD goals. They therefore urged that the resource-allocation system finally adopted should not penalize success and should protect gains made in national population programmes. In that regard, a large number of delegations supported the suggestion made by one delegation to maintain flexibility in allocating resources between the three groups by using bands of percentages rather than fixing one overall percentage for each group.

167. Several delegations made the suggestion that, to the extent possible, the data used for the seven indicators should be based on five-year averages rather than using information solely from the latest available year. That would avoid data anomalies that might vary from one year to another. The delegations also noted the desirability of incorporating into the resource-allocation procedure a waiting period of perhaps three years before moving a country from one group to another in the case of countries that had made progress according to the indicators being monitored. That, again, would be in the interest of assuring the viability of progress made in population programmes.

168. With regard to the distribution of resources to individual countries within each group, several suggestions were made. Many delegations suggested that using the adoption of a formal population policy as a criterion for resource distribution should be avoided as it could be misconstrued as an attempt to reinforce demographic targets. A number of delegations stressed the importance, as an essential criterion for resource distribution to individual countries, the commitment to the population and development goals as set out in the ICPD, while acknowledging the difficulty in quantitatively measuring such commitment. Many delegations were also of the view that more balance was needed in selecting criteria to assure that the integrated "population and development" approach endorsed at Cairo was retained. A few delegations additionally noted that, while population size was a needed criterion, population growth rate, especially in the case of small island developing countries, was also an important criterion that should be included in determining resource distribution to individual countries. A number of delegations did not favour

the use of absorptive capacity as a criterion while several others mentioned it as a possibility.

169. Although the delegations expressed overall satisfaction with the efforts of the Fund to propose a new approach for resource allocation in line with ICPD goals, many delegations felt that the process should mature further before a final decision was taken on such a vitally important matter. They therefore recommended that it be taken up again at the second regular session 1996 of the Executive Board. Among the suggestions that could be developed further, according to them, would be the combining of the differing relative shares recommended in the report for options I and II, thereby forming "bands" or ranges of shares for each of the three groups. Another suggestion for further analysis was to use GNP per capita as one of the criteria for distribution of resources to individual countries within each of the three groups.

170. In response to the many suggestions made, UNFPA provided several clarifications. South-South cooperation would apply to all countries with relevant experience to offer other developing countries and would not be confined to group C countries. While some of the indicators were inexact surrogates for the underlying goals they measured - especially in the area of reproductive health - in a matter of a few years better measures should be available. UNFPA was working with others in the international community to improve data in terms of both methodology and collection. UNFPA was of the view, too, that national commitment to population and development policies and programmes was a fundamental criterion for assigning resources to countries. Through programme review and strategy development (PRSD) missions, situation analyses and information gathered by other international organizations, qualitative information was available even at that time. Domestic financial contributions, even modest ones in the poorest countries, should, in the opinion of UNFPA, be used in assessing the distribution of resources to individual countries.

171. In summing up, the Executive Director indicated that it was important for the Executive Board to reach a decision on the new approach to resource allocations at the second regular session 1996. More than 30 country programmes would be coming up for renewal during the coming year. Without a new process, resources would end up being allocated according to pre-ICPD thinking for years to come. With the active cooperation of delegations in informal consultations in the immediate future, the Executive Director felt it would still be possible to revise the report in time for the second regular session. In her estimation, the unresolved elements for reaching a consensus on the new approach were few and could readily be discussed in the coming days for incorporation into a revised report.

172. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/10. Strategy for allocation of UNFPA country resources

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report on a new approach for the allocation of United Nations Population Fund resources to country programmes (document DP/FPA/1996/1);

2. Decides to continue its consideration of this agenda item at its second regular session 1996;

3. Requests the Executive Director to submit to the Board at its second regular session 1996 a revised document reflecting the comments made by members of the Board on the new approach for the allocation of United Nations Population Fund resources during the first regular session 1996 of the Board.

19 January 1996

XI. FUTURE ROLE OF UNFPA IN ASSESSING AND MEETING CONTRACEPTIVE REQUIREMENTS AND LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT NEEDS

173. The Executive Board decided to postpone consideration of the item to the second regular session 1996.

XII GLOBAL CONTRACEPTIVE COMMODITY PROGRAMME

174. The Deputy Executive Director for Programme introduced the report on the Global Contraceptive Commodity Programme (document DP/FPA/1996/3). He noted that in its decision 95/36, the Executive Board had agreed in principle to the establishment of the global contraceptive commodity programme to be managed by UNFPA and had requested a comprehensive report on the envisaged programme, including the objectives and scope, administrative and financial aspects, and UNFPA efforts to promote national capacity, drawing on the experience of other United Nations agencies, in particular, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Health Organization, and the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office, in order to take a final decision on the matter. He stated that two issues in the report needed further clarification: (a) the initial capitalization of $5 million to establish the programme was deemed the minimum amount necessary to facilitate the procurement of a range of commonly requested contraceptive products and that experience to date indicated that the emphasis would be given to condoms and intra-uterine devices (IUDs) since those were the products most in demand and ones requiring lengthy lead-times; and (b) the fee proposed for the programme would be the same 5 per cent that was currently charged for UNFPA regular procurement services - there would be no extra charge for urgent requests. He also stated that UNFPA had no intention of establishing a warehousing facility for contraceptives. Informal discussions had shown that manufacturers would be willing to hold stocks of contraceptives for UNFPA until they were needed for shipment.

175. He said that the proposed programme was part of the UNFPA overall objective of building national capacity and that the programme would be coordinated with other UNFPA activities such as needs assessments and technical cooperation for logistics management systems. He added that local

production and local procurement of contraceptives were areas of national capacity-building that UNFPA had supported in the past and would continue to work on in the future. He said that the global contraceptive commodity programme was viewed by many donors and UNFPA as a means of meeting country requests for contraceptives, including condoms for HIV/AIDS prevention, in a more effective and efficient manner, and that it was fully consistent with the broad reproductive health approach, including family planning and sexual health, that the Board had endorsed in decision 95/15.

176. Numerous delegations commended the report and expressed their strong support for the establishment of the Global Contraceptive Commodity Programme. A number of delegations from developing countries underscored the need for the programme owing to the difficulties many countries experience with contraceptive stock shortfalls. Those shortfalls were attributable to a number of factors, such as a shortfall in funds, problems with procurement and warehousing, or an inaccurate assessment of need. Several delegations emphasized that shortfalls in contraceptive supplies created serious problems and could undermine efforts to provide high-quality reproductive health services. Many delegations stated that UNFPA had a comparative advantage in dealing with urgent contraceptive commodity requests thanks to its experience with country reproductive health programmes. One delegation emphasized that UNFPA had built trust in its ability to procure contraceptives, as shown by the fact that many donors were using UNFPA procurement services.

177 Several delegations expressed concerns about the report and thought that it did not adequately address the request of the Board for a thorough investigation of the experience of other United Nations agencies in providing emergency procurement services. One delegation was critical of the representation of IAPSO procurement capabilities in the report. Several delegations stated that UNFPA should focus on implementation of the reproductive health approach and that expanding its contraceptive procurement services would create an image problem for UNFPA. Several delegations expressed concern that the proposed global contraceptive commodity programme might not provide a solution to the problems of contraceptive shortages, and that more attention should be paid to national capacity-building in the area of logistics management systems. One delegation explained that donors would be disinclined to provide funds to countries with logistics management problems and that UNFPA should focus its efforts in that area. Several delegations said they would be willing to support the proposed programme if they could be assured that it would be established on a temporary basis as a short-term solution to the problems of contraceptive shortages arising in developing countries. They hoped that UNFPA could offer long-term solutions to contraceptive supply problems through national capacity-building in developing countries.

178. In response to the suggestion made by many delegations that UNFPA needed to place greater emphasis on national capacity-building in the area of contraceptive supply, UNFPA informed the Executive Board that technical advisory services were being provided in a number of areas, including local production of contraceptives (where appropriate), local procurement capacity, and infrastructure and skills for logistics management. UNFPA also assured delegations that the proposed global contraceptive commodity programme would be set up as a temporary programme and that it offered an immediate response to countries' requests for assistance with urgent contraceptive supply problems.

179. The Executive Director stated that the UNFPA mandate in the area reproductive health included the procurement of contraceptive commodities. UNFPA was committed to meeting better the needs of individuals for reproductive health information and services. One of those needs continued to be for safe and effective modern methods of family planning, including condoms for HIV/AIDS prevention. Access to contraception also contributed to safe motherhood, reduced the transmission of STDs and empowered women in society.

180. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/03. Global contraceptive commodity programme

The Executive Board

1. Takes notes of the report, as contained in document DP/FPA/1996/3, and of the comments made during the Executive Board session;

2. Endorses the establishment of a global contraceptive commodity programme, to be managed by the United Nations Population Fund, and funded with an initial capitalization of $5 million, as set out in paragraph 23 of document DP/FPA/1996/3, as an integral component of the overall work of the Fund in strengthening reproductive health programmes, including family planning and sexual health, and emphasizes that these activities should be monitored carefully to ensure that they adhere to technical standards of safety and quality;

3. Requests the Executive Director to submit an annual progress report on the activities and the management of the global contraceptive commodity programme to the Executive Board, paying particular attention to the progress in strengthening national capacities to deal with the logistical aspects of contraceptive procurement;

4. Requests the Executive Director to engage in further appropriate collaboration and coordination with other relevant United Nations entities, in particular, the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office and the World Health Organization, active in the fields of procurement and reproductive health;

5. Requests the Executive Director to arrange an overall independent and external evaluation of the global contraceptive commodity programme at a time to be decided by the Executive Board, particularly with regard to its impact on national capacity-building in order to provide the Board with the information required to make a decision on whether the programme should be continued or ended.

19 January 1996

XIII. MEMBERSHIP IN THE UNICEF/WHO JOINT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH POLICY

181. The Executive Board decided to postpone consideration of the item to the second regular session 1996.

XIV. COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS

Interim assistance for South Africa (DP/FPA/1996/10)

182. The Director, Africa Division, introduced the UNFPA request for interim assistance for South Africa (DP/FPA/1996/10) and additional funding authority for Mali (DP/FPA/1996/7), Uganda (DP/FPA/1996/8), and Burkina Faso (DP/FPA/1996/9). Following the introductory remarks, the Executive Board decided to discuss the submissions for the four countries as a group in order to save time.

183. In regard to South Africa, approval was requested for interim assistance to South Africa in the amount of $4.2 million over a three-year period beginning in 1994 to enable UNFPA to continue working with the Government in developing the population components of South Africa's Reconstruction and Development Programme. One delegation, speaking on behalf of the African Group, commended UNFPA and the Director of the Africa Division for its efforts in South Africa and requested the Executive Board to approve the requests for additional resources. One delegation underlined the importance of HIV/AIDS prevention education for youth under 20 years, particularly with regard to South Africa and Uganda. Another delegation observed that South Africa had not yet completed the development of a population policy for reasons that were deemed to be obvious. He called attention to the perceived need to provide support for advocacy and social mobilization in the country. One delegation raised the issue of the effect that the ongoing UNFPA programme would have on South Africa's current programme of decentralization. Another commented on the implications of social adjustment porgrammes in the region and voiced support for South Africa.

184. In her reply, the Director of the Africa Division remarked that South Africa's problems were of special concern to the Fund. The Government was still in the process of seeking to consolidate its efforts in the population sector. Population policies needed to be de-mystified, and youth had to have access to reproductive health services. However, there were no simple answers. She said that the programme under consideration was a transitional one for which technical cooperation would be provided while a more comprehensive programme of assistance was being prepared. She commented that the experiences of Uganda and Ethiopia, countries that had undertaken their own decentralization processes, could be helpful to South Africa. She observed that Africa as a whole still had enormous problems to overcome and needed training to build a critical mass of trained staff as well as advocacy efforts to draw attention to population issues and to encourage hesitant Governments to confront population issues. The representative of South Africa thanked UNFPA for its valuable assistance and commented that the 1996 census supported by UNFPA would benefit future policy development. He urged UNFPA to reinforce and expand the work already under way.

185. The Executive Board approved the interim assistance to South Africa in the amount of $4.2 million as contained in document DP/FPA/1996/10.

Request for additional resources for Mali (DP/FPA/1996/7)

186. In the consideration by the Executive Board of the request for the extension of, and additional resources for, the Mali country programme

(DP/FPA/1996/7), one delegation raised the concern that not enough resources were being devoted to women. The representative of Mali expressed appreciation for the support UNFPA was providing and asked how UNFPA assistance was being coordinated with the UNDP country programme.

187. In her response, the Director of the Africa Division said that a particular problem in Mali had been the lack of a counterpart women's organization with which to work. Such an organization now existed, however, and she hoped that that would mean a greater allocation of resources in the area of gender, population and development in the next country programme. She said that UNFPA was working closely with UNDP in its programme of improving the country's health situation and thought that it could serve as a model for other countries as well.

188. The Executive Board approved the increase of the funding authority for the Mali country programme by $2.55 million and the extension of the current programme by one year, to the end of 1996, as presented in document DP/FPA/1996/7.

Request for additional resources for Uganda (DP/FPA/1996/8)

189. There was general support among members of the Executive Board for the proposal to provide additional resources for the UNFPA country programme in Uganda (DP/FPA/1996/8). One delegation emphasized the importance of providing information and education on HIV/AIDS prevention for the country's youth. Another delegation noted the improved coordination of population activities and collaboration with donors that was being carried out by the UNFPA Country Director. It was recognized that progress had been made in the reproductive health and gender programmes; it was stressed, however, that delivery of reproductive health services continued to be weak. The same delegation expressed two major concerns: first, it questioned whether current IEC efforts were effective and thus should receive added funding; and, second, whether it was justifiable and appropriate for UNFPA to support district population planning activities.

190. The representative of Uganda expressed appreciation for the assistance provided by UNFPA and the donors. The representative agreed that the various concerns expressed by the delegations should be seriously considered. HIV/AIDS was a major problem that should receive more emphasis, especially with regard to prevention among young people. The Government of Uganda placed much importance on IEC efforts and had requested additional support in that area. As a result of recent economic reforms, most governmental planning processes were being decentralized to the district level. Not many donors were active in the decentralization process. The Government appreciated UNFPA support in promoting coordinated and integrated population and development planning at the district level as a way of implementing the national population policy at the grass-roots level.

191. The Director of the Africa Division expressed appreciation for the support by the delegations for increased funding for the country programme. Those funds would enable the programme to expand reproductive health services to all 24 of the country's districts. She noted that the IEC programme supported by UNFPA focused on reproductive health, including HIV/AIDS, and often contained provision for reproductive health services. She stated that

the current IEC programme had been strong and effective in its outreach to the general public and specific audiences. For example, one component of the programme included reproductive health IEC campaigns for 120 industries. The main problem was that delivery of quality reproductive health services continued to lag behind the demand for such services that were being generated by IEC activities. A new programme for youth and reproductive health had been initiated and was being closely monitored to ascertain if it might provide a model approach for other countries.

192. The Executive Board approved the request for additional funding of $6.2 million for the Country Programme for Uganda as contained in document DP/FPA/1996/8.

Request for additional resources for Burkina Faso (DP/FPA/1996/9)

193. In her introductory remarks, the Director of the Africa Division reported that some concerns had been raised about the proposed additional resources for the country programme for Burkina Faso (document DP/FPA/1996/9). Therefore, she said that the request was being reconsidered and would be presented to the Board for its consideration at a future session, but she invited comments from any interested delegations. Several delegations emphasized the need for continuing assistance to Burkina Faso but saw no problem with reconsidering the proposal in the future.

194. The Executive Board agreed to postpone consideration of the request for additional resources for the UNFPA country programme for Burkina Faso (DP/FPA/1996/9) to the second regular session 1996.

XV. SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION

195. The Deputy Executive Director for Programme introduced document DP/FPA/1996/11 on South-South cooperation: UNFPA support to Partners in Population and Development. He noted that the Partners in Population and Development had been formed by 10 developing countries as a way of implementing the recommendations of the Programme of Action of the ICPD concerning South-South cooperation. They had held their initial organizational meeting at Harare, Zimbabwe, in April 1995, at which time they had requested that UNFPA provide them with administrative and personnel management support, in addition to programme support. In that context, UNFPA had agreed to establish a trust fund for the Partners, which currently had contributions of approximately $1 million from the Rockefeller Foundation and $150,000 each from the World Bank and UNFPA. UNFPA was also requested to recruit and assign project personnel to the Partners' Secretariat, and the Fund was now asking the Executive Board to approve that request. The Deputy Executive Director emphasized that the request did not entail creating a permanent post for UNFPA.

196. Numerous delegations noted the importance of South-South cooperation as way of increasing the national capacity of developing countries to carry out population programmes on their own and endorsed the particular support that UNFPA was being requested to provide in that instance. Several delegations, however, questioned whether providing that kind of administrative, as opposed

to programmatic, support was the best way for UNFPA to help the Partners. They also wondered whether the trust fund that had been set up was going to be used for administrative costs or would be used to finance programme activities, which were seen as being more important. Others questioned whether the proposed staffing arrangement was a temporary or permanent measure and whether relying on UNFPA was not negating the very aim of South-South cooperation itself, i.e., having developing countries manage and carry out their own programmes. Some questioned whether that did not make the initiative a UNFPA- and donor-driven activity rather than an indigenous and country-driven programme, which was what it should be. Several delegations wanted to know if the Partners' arrangement was a closed grouping and whether other countries could join in what was perceived to be a very worthwhile initiative.

197. The Deputy Executive Director reiterated that even though UNFPA had been asked to provide and channel administrative and programme support, the Partners were an autonomous organization. He also noted that several potential donors had requested UNFPA involvement because its established personnel and financial management operations would allow the Partners to start working quickly and would inspire a level of confidence that could help to generate more funding. He also said that it was everyone's intention that the current arrangements would be temporary, and further assistance of that type would have to be approved by the Executive Board. To allay what seemed to be the concern of several delegations, he pointed out that it was far from being UNFPA only activity in the area of South-South cooperation, and that the programmatic framework for such activities had been approved by the Board as part of the Fund's intercountry programme. UNFPA certainly planned to work with the Partners in many aspects of their programme and not just by providing administrative support. He noted that the Partners constituted an autonomous body, and therefore they were solely responsible for determining membership in the group. However, the Partners had always made it clear that they were not an exclusive body and would open up their membership to others, as requested and as appropriate.

198. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/09. South-South cooperation: UNFPA support to "Partners in Population and Development"

The Executive Board

1. *Approves* the arrangements proposed to support the intergovernmental organization "Partners in Population and Development", as outlined in the report on South-South cooperation: UNFPA support to "Partners in Population and Development" (document DP/FPA/1996/11);

2. *Invites* the Partners to consider broadening the scope by actively involving other developing countries as well as countries with economies in transition in the programmes of "Partners in Population and Development";

3. *Requests* the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund to report to the Executive Board at the third regular session 1998 on the activities and achievements of this initiative, including the role of the UNFPA, and on the justification for further Fund involvement beyond 1998.

19 January 1996

XVI. OTHER MATTERS

Global Mechanism of the Convention to Combat Desertification

199. In addressing the Executive Board on developments regarding the Global Mechanism of the Convention to Combat Desertification, the Administrator recalled that the issue had initially been discussed at the first regular session 1995, when he had reported that UNDP was well placed to serve as the host of the Global Mechanism and had offered the services of the organization to host it. At that time, delegations had stated that, while UNDP might be an appropriate body to house the Global Mechanism, they would await the decision of the first Conference of Parties to the Convention, as envisaged under the Convention.

200. In updating the Executive Board on further developments, the Administrator noted that the discussions during the seventh meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Conference to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (INC-D) in Nairobi, held from 7 to 18 August 1995, had been preliminary. The issue of the functions of the Global Mechanism was, however, still open to differing interpretations. Thus, the Interim Secretariat of the INC-D had been requested to prepare an analytical and synoptic report to facilitate the discussion at the eighth INC-D meeting, where the first substantive discussions on the full terms of reference of the Global Mechanism and the identification of an organization to host it would take place. The Administrator informed the Board that he would address that meeting and contribute to the discussion on the terms of reference and modus operandi of the Global Mechanism.

201. One delegation noted that while the functions of the Global Mechanism were not yet clear, and were to be decided upon at the eighth INC-D meeting, his Government would have preferred the Administrator to have consulted further with the Executive Board before informing the parties to the Convention about the capacity and willingness of UNDP to host the Global Mechanism. He also noted that although the Board would not govern the Global Mechanism, which would report to the Conference of Parties of the Convention, it was important to ascertain the cost implications for UNDP for hosting the Global Mechanism, which would be a long-term commitment.

202. The Administrator responded that it was his view that he had provided information to the Executive Board at its first regular session 1995 indicating the intention of UNDP to propose its capacity and willingness to host the Global Mechanism. The Director of the Office to Combat Desertification and Drought (UNSO) explained that every effort had been made to keep the Board informed on the progress of discussions and decisions on the Global Mechanism, despite the fact that the process has been a rather gradual and iterative one, as the responsibilities of the Global Mechanism were not yet well defined. He noted that according to the Convention, the more detailed discussions on administrative and financing arrangements were to take place only after the hosting organization had been identified, and observed that UNDP would be reporting to the Board in order to benefit from its guidance and decisions on the issue.

203. Another delegation underlined its view that the decision of the Conference of Parties on the host organization would influence the Executive Board in its opinion on the matter. He also requested, and received, information on the other organizations who had earlier been invited to consider hosting the Global Mechanism.

Tribute to Mr. Jean-Jacques Graisse

204. The Administrator thanked delegations for a productive session, and expressed special appreciation to Mr. Jean-Jacques Graisse, Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Resources and External Affairs, and Secretary of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board, for his able leadership of the Board. Mr. Graisse, who was joining the World Food Programme as Assistant Executive Director (Operations), would be deeply missed.

205. On behalf of the Executive Board, the President made a statement in tribute to Mr. Graisse. She underlined the valuable contribution of Mr. Graisse to the work of the Board, and his congenial personality which had led to the creation of a positive atmosphere in the Board.

Assistance to Myanmar

206. One delegation wished to bring to the attention of the Executive Board a letter dated 14 January 1996 addressed to the Administrator from Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi, General-Secretary of the National League for Democracy in Myanmar. His delegation asked that the management of UNDP review the letter and then hold an informal briefing for interested Board members in order to present comments on the contents of the letter. He underlined that his delegation did not intend to reopen the debate and decision on the item of assistance to Myanmar, which the Board had already concluded.

207. On a point of order, another delegation noted that other Executive Board members had not received the letter and thus could not participate effectively in any further discussion on the subject.

208. The President informed the Executive Board that further discussion would not be held on the matter since members did not have a copy of the letter.

209. The Executive Board concluded its work by adopting the folloing decision:

96/12. Overview of decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its first regular session 1996

The Executive Board

Recalls that during the first regular session 1996 it:

ITEM 1: ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Elected the following Bureau for 1996:

President	H.E. Ms. Annette DES ILES (Trinidad and Tobago)
Vice-President	Mr. Rolando BAHAMONDES (Canada)
Vice-President	Mr. Bruce L. NAMAKANDO (Zambia)
Vice-President	Ms. Cecilia B. REBONG (Philippines)
Vice-President	Mr. Milan DUBCEK (Slovakia)

Approved the agenda and work plan for its first regular session 1996 (DP/1996/L.1);

Approved the report of the third regular session 1995 (DP/1995/54);

Agreed to the following schedule of future sessions of the Executive Board in New York subject to the approval of the Committee on Conferences:

Second regular session 1996:	25-29 March 1996
Annual session 1996:	6-17 May 1996 (Geneva)
Third regular session 1996:	9-13 September 1996

(Note: 16 May is an official United Nations holiday in Geneva)

Agreed to the subjects to be discussed at these sessions as listed in the annex;

Adopted decision 96/06 of 19 January 1996 on documentation.

ITEM 2: INITIATIVES FOR CHANGE

Took note of the report of the Administrator on the follow-up to paragraph 4 of Executive Board decision 95/22 with the comments made thereon (DP/1996/2);

ITEM 3: MATTERS RELATING TO THE PROGRAMMING CYCLES

Adopted decision 96/07 of 19 January 1996 on the implementation of successor programming arrangements;

Adopted decision 96/11 of 19 January 1996 on UNDP assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina;

ITEM 4: UNDP: COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS

Adopted decision 96/01 of 16 January 1996 on assistance to Myanmar;

Took note of the extension for the fifth country programe for Fiji (DP/CP/FIJ/5/EXTENSION 1);

Took note of the extension for the fifth country programe for Tonga (DP/CP/TON/5/EXTENSION 1);

Approved the first country cooperation framework for Bangladesh (DP/CCF/BGD/1);

Took note of the programme objectives for Aruba covering the period 1994-1996 (DP/1996/5);

Took note of the programme objectives for Trinidad and Tobago covering the period 1994-1996 (DP/1996/6);

ITEM 5: REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE INTER-AGENCY PROCUREMENT SERVICES OFFICE

Adopted decision 96/02 of 17 January 1996 on Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office;

ITEM 6: UNITED NATIONS TECHNICAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES

Adopted decision 96/04 of 19 January 1996 on United Nations technical cooperation activities;

ITEM 7: UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN

Adopted decision 96/08 of 19 January 1996 on the United Nations Development Fund for Women;

ITEM 8: AGENCY SUPPORT COSTS

Agreed to postpone consideration of this item to the second regular session 1996;

ITEM 9: UNDP/UNFPA: FOLLOW-UP TO AND PREPARATION FOR THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Adopted decision 96/05 of 19 January on follow-up to and preparations for the Economic and Social Council;

ITEM 10: UNDP/UNFPA: JOINT UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON HIV/AIDS

Agreed to postpone consideration of this item to the second regular session 1996;

ITEM 11: UNFPA: STRATEGY FOR RESOURCE ALLOCATION

Adopted decision 96/10 of 19 January 1996 on the strategy for allocation of UNFPA resources;

ITEM 12: UNFPA: FUTURE ROLE OF UNPFA IN ASSESSING AND MEETING CONTRACEPTIVE REQUIREMENTS AND LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT NEEDS

Agreed to postpone consideration of this item to the second regular session 1996;

ITEM 13: UNFPA: GLOBAL CONTRACEPTIVE COMMODITY PROGRAMME

Adopted decision 96/03 of 19 January 1996 on the Global contraceptive commodity programme;

ITEM 14: UNFPA: MEMBERSHIP IN THE UNICEF/WHO JOINT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH POLICY

Agreed to postpone consideration of this item to the second regular session 1996;

ITEM 15: UNFPA: COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS

Approved the interim assistance for South Africa (DP/FPA/1996/10);

Approved the additional resources for the UNFPA country programme for Mali (DP/FPA/1996/7);

Approved the additional resources for the UNFPA country programme for Uganda (DP/FPA/1996/8);

Agreed to postpone consideration of the request for the additional resources for the UNFPA country programme for Burkina Faso (DP/FPA/1996/9) to the second regular session 1996;

ITEM 16: UNFPA: SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION

Adopted decision 96/09 of 19 January 1996 on UNFPA support to "Partners in Population and Development";

ITEM 17: OTHER MATTERS

Took note of the presentation by the Administrator of UNDP on the Global Mechanism of the Convention to Combat Desertification (DP/1996/CRP.1) and the comments made thereon;

19 January 1996

Annex

ALLOCATION OF SUBJECTS FOR FUTURE SESSIONS

The following subjects are scheduled for consideration at future sessions:

Second regular session (25-29 March 1996)

Item 1. Organizational matters

UNFPA segment

Item 2. UNFPA: Strategy for allocation of UNFPA resources (96/4)

Item 3. UNFPA: Country programmes and related matters

Item 4. UNFPA: Effectiveness of the UNFPA publications programme (95/35)

Item 5. UNFPA: Role of UNFPA in assessing and meeting contraceptive requirements and logistics management needs (95/21)

Item 6. UNFPA: Membership in the UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy (95/15)

UNFPA/UNDP segment

Item 7. UNFPA/UNDP: Harmonization of presentation of budget and accounts (oral report)

Item 8. UNFPA/UNDP: Joint and Co-Sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

UNDP segment

Item 9. UNDP: Agency support costs (DP/1995/49)

Item 10. UNDP: Country programmes and related matters (mid-term reviews)

Item 11. UNDP: Financial, budgetary and administrative matters: Follow-up to Executive Board decision 95/28 (§ 14, § 36, § 37)

Item 12. UNDP: Evaluation (92/2, § 3)

Item 13. UNDP: Assistance to the Palestinian people (92/2, § 3)

Item 14. Other matters (including report on field visit)

Annual session (6-17 May 1996-Geneva)

- Organizational matters
- Rules of procedure

UNFPA segment

- Report of the Executive Director and programme-level activities
- Mission statement of UNFPA

UNFPA/UNDP segment

- Reports to the Economic and Social Council
- Harmonization of presentation of budget and accounts

UNDP segment

- Annual report of the Administrator and related matters (including Initiatives for change)
- Matters relating to the programming cycles:
    - Implementation of the new programming arrangements: interim report
- United Nations Volunteers (92/2, § 5)
- United Nations Development Fund for Women
- United Nations Office for Project Services

Third regular session (9-13 September 1996)

- Organizational matters

UNFPA segment

- Financial, budgetary and administrative matters
- Country programmes and related matters

UNFPA/UNDP segment

- Harmonization of presentation of budgets and accounts
- Reports on field visits

UNDP segment

- Matters relating to programming cycles: Follow-up to Executive Board decisions 95/23 and 95/26
- Country programmes and related matters
- Financial, budgetary and administrative matters
- United Nations Development Fund for Women
  - -- Follow-up to Executive Board decisions 95/18 and 95/32
- Report on the activities of the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office

1997 sessions

First regular session 1997	13-17 January 1997
Second regular session 1997	10-14 March 1997
Annual session 1997	5-16 May 1997
Third regular session 1997	15-19 September 1997

Part two

SECOND REGULAR SESSION

Held at United Nations Headquarters from 9 to 13 September 1996

I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

1. The President, H.E. Mrs. Annette des Iles (Trinidad and Tobago), opened the second regular session 1996 of the Executive Board. She assured the Board that the Bureau would continue to do its best to assist the members in reaching consensus on the various issues that would be brought up during the session. She informed the Executive Board that Mr. Humphrey B. Kunda, Deputy Permanent Representative of Zambia, would represent Mr. Bruce Namakando (Zambia) as Vice-President of the Board for the present session.

2. She informed the Executive Board that the Bureau had met three times, on 26 and 27 February and 25 March. The Bureau had met with members of Management System International, the consulting firm selected to undertake the external evaluation of UNIFEM, called for by the Executive Board in its decision 95/32. The firm had asked for the meeting with the Bureau to clarify aspects of the terms of reference contained in that decision. At its 27 February meeting, the Bureau endorsed the composition of its working group on documentation, established by Executive Board decision 96/6. The group was composed of representatives proposed by linguistic groups and of the secretariats of UNDP, UNFPA, the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Office of Conference Services. The list of members had been distributed to the Board. The working group had met twice and would report regularly to the Bureau on its progress and at the annual session 1996. The Bureau had also reviewed the agenda for the current session and made a number of proposals regarding the work plan, which had been presented at the informal pre-session meeting on 11 March.

3. The Secretary of the Executive Board informed the meeting that owing to the financial situation of the United Nations, pre-session documents that had already been distributed to the Permanent Missions would no longer be made available in multiple copies in the conference room. Reference copies for consultation would, however, be available in the document booth. In addition to that listed in DP/1996/L.6 and Corr.1, documentation for the session included: the report of the Administrative Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) (DP/1996/25) and two conference room papers for consideration under item 11; and two conference room papers for consideration under item 12. All four conference room papers were available in the three working languages.

4. The Executive Board approved the following agenda for its second regular session, as contained in document DP/1996/L.6 and Corr.1:

Item 1. Organizational matters

UNFPA segment

Item 2. UNFPA: Strategy for allocation of UNFPA resources (96/4)

Item 3. UNFPA: Country programmes and related matters

Item 4. UNFPA: Effectiveness of the UNFPA publications programme (95/35)

Item 5. UNFPA: Role of UNFPA in assessing and meeting contraceptive requirements and logistics management needs (95/21)

Item 6. UNFPA: Membership in the UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy (95/15)

UNFPA/UNDP joint segment

Item 7. UNFPA/UNDP: Harmonization of presentation of budget and accounts (oral report)

Item 8. UNFPA/UNDP: Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

UNDP segment

Item 9. UNDP: Agency support costs

Item 10. UNDP: Country programmes and related matters (mid-term reviews)

Item 11. UNDP: Financial, budgetary and administrative matters: Follow-up to Executive Board decision 95/28 (paras. 14, 36, and 37)

Item 12. UNDP: Evaluation (92/2, para. 3)

Item 13. UNDP: Assistance to the Palestinian people (92/2, para. 3)

Item 14. Other matters (including report on field visit)

5. The Executive Board approved the work plan, contained in document DP/1995/L.6/Corr.1, as orally amended.

6. The Secretary informed the Executive Board that an informal briefing by the UNDP Resident Representative in Mozambique, in connection with consideration by the Executive Board of the country's mid-term review, would be held on 27 March.

7. The Executive Board approved the report of the first regular session 1996 (DP/1996/11).

Future sessions

8. The Secretary brought to the attention of the Executive Board the dates of future sessions and allocation of items contained in document DP/1996/L.6 as well as in the annotated agenda for the annual session 1996 (DP/1996/L.7), an advance copy of which had been distributed to Executive Board members. She noted that given the deadline of 18 March 1996 for submission of documentation for the annual session 1996, any changes made to the provisional agenda as a result of discussions at the current session would appear in a corrigendum to document DP/1996/L.7. In addition, the report of the second regular session 1996 would not be available in languages until the second week of the annual session, given its submission after the deadline.

9. The Secretary informed the Executive Board that the Bureau had proposed some changes to the work plan for the annual session 1996, contained in document DP/1996/L.7. The revisions included taking up item 9, United Nations Volunteers (UNV), on 10 May, so that it would directly precede the commemorative session of the twenty-fifth anniversary of UNV. The Bureau had also suggested that the Executive Board hold an informal discussion during the morning of 15 May 1996 with the Administrator on a topical theme of direct interest. It was noted that 16 May 1996 was a holiday in Switzerland.

10. One delegation requested that the Executive Board include for consideration under item 7 (annual report of the Administrator, including initiatives for change) of the agenda for the annual session 1996, the executive summary of the February 1996 report "Assessment of UNDP", prepared by the Governments of Denmark, India, Sweden and the United Kingdom. He explained that the report's findings were a contribution to the UNDP reform process. Another delegation thanked the Governments who had prepared the assessment.

11. One delegation requested the scheduling of a dialogue with selected UNFPA country representatives during the UNFPA segment of the annual session 1996. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) of UNFPA stated that UNFPA would consider the proposal, but noted that the Fund would not be submitting country programmes at the annual session. He pointed out that the UNFPA representatives could address issues raised in the context of the Executive Director's annual report, should such a dialogue be arranged.

12. One delegation, on behalf of others, requested consideration by the Executive Board at its annual session of the number of sessions held per year, stating that four sessions reduced the participation of many members and observers, particularly from developing countries, given the many other concurrent meetings that required coverage. Moreover, the frequent sessions created technical problems for the production of documentation by the Executive Board secretariat. He noted that the objective of the Executive Board was not to focus on itself, but to give guidance to UNDP and UNFPA country-level operations. It would be useful to discuss the matter of the number of sessions, together with spacing, streamlining of the agenda and other working methods. Several other delegations supported the proposal. One delegation suggested some measures aimed at increasing efficiency: discussion of country programmes on an exceptional basis; issuance of some documentation for information purposes only; and holding three sessions, with one extended session.

13. Another delegation, supported by others, expressed concern about the high cost involved for delegations from developing countries who were required to travel to Geneva to participate in the annual sessions held there every other year. He requested UNDP and UNFPA to consider financing the travel expenses of one representative of each delegation to the Executive Board from a developing country. Other delegations also requested a review of the venue of the annual session.

14. The Executive Board approved the following dates for future sessions:

Annual session 1996 (Geneva)	6-17 May 1996
Third regular session 1996	9-13 September 1996

15. The Executive Board approved the allocation of subjects as contained in document DP/1996/L.6, as orally amended.

16. The Executive Board approved the work plan contained in document DP/1996/L.7, as orally amended.

17. The Executive Board approved decision 96/24, an overview of decisions taken by the Board during the second regular session 1996.

UNFPA SEGMENT

II. STRATEGY FOR ALLOCATION OF UNFPA RESOURCES

18. The Executive Director introduced the report on a revised approach for the allocation of UNFPA resources to country programmes (DP/FPA/1996/15). The report was submitted in response to decision 96/10, in which the Executive Board requested the Executive Director to submit a revision of the proposed approach for the allocation of UNFPA resources at the Board's second regular session 1996 in order to reflect comments made by members during the first regular session 1996 on document DP/FPA/1996/1.

19. The Executive Director noted that the revised document still retained the principle of using the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) relating to reproductive health, infant and maternal mortality reduction and female education in categorizing countries for UNFPA assistance. Likewise, the same seven indicators and their threshold levels for the determination of three groups of countries had been retained. As before, the current proposal also gave special attention to the least developed countries, to low-income countries and to Africa.

20. A number of modifications had been introduced to take account of comments made during the previous session of the Executive Board. The criterion of per capita gross national product (GNP) of less than $750 had been strictly applied, in combination with the indicators for the ICPD goals, in defining countries belonging to Group A. Also, to respond to the call for flexibility, the document proposed bands for relative shares of resources for Groups A, B and C. Further, a number of qualitative and quantitative factors were proposed to distribute resources flexibly to individual countries within each category.

21. Numerous delegations welcomed the revised report and expressed their sense that the document addressed most of the issues that the Board had noted in the earlier version discussed at the previous session. Many felt that the introduction of bands for the relative allocation of resources among the three groups of countries was a wise one that reflected the flexibility needed to implement the new approach. The general feeling of the Board was that the

indicators used fairly represented the goals of the ICPD, while several delegations suggested that continuous support should be given to eventually introducing indicators that would better capture quality and accessibility of services. One delegation queried why the educational indicator used gross enrolment ratios rather than net enrolment ratios.

22. Much of the discussion revolved around the range of the bands for relative allocations to each group of countries. Some delegations favoured flexibility within groups of countries but not between groups. Others pointed out that for optimum use of the scarce resources of UNFPA, both inter- and intra-group flexibility were necessary. It was pointed out by some delegations that the band for Group A countries was broader than that for the other two groups, and the suggestion was made that reducing the range to 67-69 per cent would make the proposed allocation system more consistent internally.

23. With regard to the distribution of resources within each group to individual countries, delegations made a number of points. Several pointed out that commitment to meeting the goals of ICPD, evidenced for example by assigning domestic resources to population programmes as well as by having coherent national programmes, plans and strategies on population and development, were factors that should be considered. Disadvantaged sub-national areas that were not reflected in national-level averages should also be taken into account. Many delegations were also of the view that the level of development, as reflected for example by the GNP per capita or by poverty levels, was an important factor to be considered in allocating resources.

24. Some delegations noted the need to improve the terminology in a few places in the report. Thus, the term "population issues" should be preferred over "population problems". Consistency was also called for in referring to the African region as a whole rather than to "sub-Saharan Africa", following the language of Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/51. Other delegations noted that South-South cooperation should not be restricted to Group C countries.

25. In response to the many suggestions made, the Executive Director made several clarifications. She noted the wide agreement among members of the Board on the need for flexibility as well as on the general approach of basing allocations on how far countries were from reaching the goals of the ICPD Programme of Action. She stressed that there were ongoing efforts, fully supported by UNFPA, to develop more adequate indicators and that these would be phased in as soon as they became available. Referring to enrolment ratios, she acknowledged that net ratios would be preferable, but gross ratios had been used because of their wider availability. She also noted that all countries, regardless of grouping, could benefit from South-South cooperation and that the report perhaps could have been clearer in this regard.

26. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/15. Allocation of resources to country programmes of the United Nations Population Fund

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the Executive Director on a revised approach for the allocation of the resources of the United Nations Population Fund to country programmes (DP/FPA/1996/15) and of the comments made thereon by the Executive Board;

2. Reaffirms the commitments demonstrated by Member States in the context of adhering to the principles in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development;

3. Also reaffirms that, in order to achieve the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development, there is a need for adequate mobilization of resources at the national and international levels as well as of new and additional resources to developing countries from all sources, including multilateral, bilateral and private sources, and calls upon those countries in a position to do so to increase their contributions to the United Nations Population Fund;

4. Endorses the approach for resource allocation contained in the report, including the indicators and threshold levels towards meeting the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development for the year 2005;

5. Also endorses, in this context, the flexible approach to the allocation of relative shares of resources to the new categories of countries as well as to the distribution of resources to individual countries in line with the section of the report entitled "Distribution of resources to individual countries";

6. Decides that the United Nations Population Fund, while using this flexible approach, should give special attention to the least developed countries, low-income countries and Africa;

7. Also decides that the United Nations Population Fund in distributing resources to individual countries within each category should use per capita gross national product as a criterion as well as other appropriate indicators of the level of development of a country;

8. Further decides that the allocation of resources should be based on a comprehensive assessment of the actual needs and requirements of countries, and should take fully into consideration coherent national programmes, plans and strategies on population and development and the need for external resources to complement national financial efforts in the area of population and development;

9. Endorses the procedure for categorization of countries into Groups A, B and C as outlined in the report and approves the following relative shares of

resources: 67-69 per cent to Group A, 22-24 per cent to Group B, 5-7 per cent to Group C and 3-4 per cent to countries with economies in transition, on a temporary basis, and 0.5 per cent to other countries;

10. *Recognizes* that some countries may still continue to require programme support in selected thematic areas to assure that the gains already made are not compromised by adverse economic situations;

11. *Also recognizes* the need to address the problems of significant social sectors and areas not reflected in national average indicators;

12. *Reaffirms* that the United Nations Population Fund should continue to promote and strengthen South-South cooperation in all groups of countries, both within and between regions;

13. *Recommends* that the revised approach for resource allocation be introduced in a phased manner, taking into account both the stage of the current cycle of assistance and the status of programme implementation in individual countries;

14. *Recommends* that the Executive Director undertake a quinquennial review of the system for resource allocation, including a performance assessment of the indicators and their threshold levels, and to report thereon to the Executive Board starting in the year 2000;

15. *Requests* the Executive Director to provide information in the annual report of the Fund on the level of allocations and disbursements to the categories of countries in line with the revised approach, as well as information on the allocations and disbursements of resources to regions, least developed countries and low-income countries;

16. *Also requests* the United Nations Population Fund to continue the methodological work needed to further develop indicators for the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development that would be of practical value in serving to assist in allocating resources, including indicators measuring the integration of all components of reproductive health and family planning services.

27 March 1996

III. COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS

27. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) made a short introductory statement on the UNFPA country programmes being presented at this session of the Board. Three new country programmes were being proposed for the sub-Saharan Africa region - Cape Verde (DP/FPA/CP/153), Chad (DP/FPA/CP/150) and Ghana (DP/FPA/CP/151). In addition, an extension of, and additional resources for, the country programme for Congo (DP/FPA/1996/16) was being requested. A similar request for the Burkina Faso programme had proven unnecessary, and the programme was being implemented through 1996 without any additional funding. Similarly, the programmes in Cameroon and Sao Tome and Principe were being extended through

1997 without any extra funding. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the Fund was presenting a request for additional resources for the country programme for Bolivia (DP/FPA/1996/12). The country programme in Cuba, which had been extended through 1995, would be further extended until the end of 1996. This extension, which would require additional resources, would be presented for approval by the Board later in the year. Likewise, the programme for Mexico was being extended to the end of 1996, but no additional funding was required. The Board was being presented with a new country programme for the Syrian Arab Republic (DP/FPA/CP/152). The programme for Malaysia was being extended through the end of 1996 with no additional funding required. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) pointed out that many of these programmes were being extended in order to synchronize the UNFPA programming cycle with those of its partner agencies in the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP).

28. Several delegations wished to address common questions concerning all of the UNFPA country programmes. Speaking for a number of delegations, one delegation stated that it was felt that the presentation of the country programmes had become too uniform and that differences in the needs of individual countries did not stand out. The documents tended to give very similar lists of activities that would be carried out in each of the three core programme areas of the Fund. The strategy designed for the particular conditions of the country involved was often not clear. Delegates would prefer more explicit statements of the purpose of each programme and a discussion of the comparative advantage that UNFPA had in carrying out the proposed activities. It would also be desirable to have expected achievements spelled out along with the methods and indicators that would be used to monitor progress towards attaining those achievements.

29. In echoing those concerns, several delegations pointed out that the country programmes being presented at this session of the Board were the first ones to be developed since the ICPD. They wanted to be sure that the proposed programmes reflected the ICPD goals and that they fit within the proposed allocation of UNFPA resources that had just been presented to the Board. One delegation pointed out that several of the country programmes being presented at this session aimed at incorporating family planning services into existing primary health care services. This delegation emphasized that family planning should not be equated with reproductive health and wanted it to be clear that in the post-ICPD environment UNFPA should be operating within a broader reproductive health framework. Some of the delegations mentioned that there were a few discrepancies in the data presented in the proposed country programmes and emphasized that United Nations reports had to be especially careful in this regard.

30. In his reply, the Deputy Executive Director (Programme) agreed with delegations that the presentation of country programmes needed to be more analytical and needed to show the comparative advantage of UNFPA in the areas in which it proposed to work. He stated that the integration of the ICPD goals into country-level activities was a major concern of UNFPA and work in this area was being carried out in several different arenas, especially in the terms of reference of the programme review and strategy development (PRSD) exercises that reviewed past programmes and developed new ones. In moving to a broader reproductive health approach, UNFPA was building on its ongoing work in the

field of family planning, which the Fund realized was only one, albeit a very important aspect of reproductive health. The re-direction of the programming activities of UNFPA was of necessity incremental but was considered to be an urgent priority. UNFPA regretted the discrepancies in data, acknowledging that obtaining reliable data in the field of reproductive health was often very difficult but that the Fund should be consistent in the data it presented.

31. The same delegation that had raised, on behalf of others, the questions about the presentation of UNFPA country programmes also brought to the attention of the Board the fact that the programming processes for UNICEF and UNDP had been changed in recent months. The changes were too new to ascertain whether the reforms were successful in achieving their desired results, and it was probably premature to call for similar revisions in the way the Board considered UNFPA country programmes. However, in view of the desire to harmonize the work of the three agencies, it would be advisable for the Fund to monitor these new developments and to report back to the Board on recommendations for a future country programming process. The representative of Denmark then proposed a draft decision to this effect.

32. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/13. Future country programming process of the United Nations Population Fund

The Executive Board

1. Invites the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund to consider ways of harmonizing the country programming process of the Fund with that of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund. In this context, the Executive Director should review the format for, content and timing of as well as the mode of discussion of the documentation submitted to the Executive Board on country activities;

2. Requests the Executive Director to submit to Member States, after consultations with the United Nations Development Programme and United Nations Children's Fund, recommendations on the future country programming process of the United Nations Population Fund based on the results of the above considerations and reviews, no later than at the annual session 1997 of the Executive Board.

26 March 1996

A. Africa Division

33. The Director of the Africa Division made a general introduction prior to the presentation of the new country programmes for Cape Verde, Chad and Ghana and the request for the extension of, and additional resources for, the country programme for Congo. With regard to the formulation of the new country programmes, the Director stressed the importance of Governments' having a sense of ownership of the PRSD process, through which the programmes in their

countries were developed. In all country programming activities, emphasis was being placed on the programme approach, on the three core programme areas endorsed by the Board after the ICPD, and on the harmonization of the programming cycles of United Nations agencies and organizations through the JCGP mechanism.

Assistance to the Government of Cape Verde (DP/FPA/CP/153)

34. The proposed third country programme (1996-2000) for Cape Verde was presented by the UNFPA Country Director for Cape Verde. He underscored the favourable and unfavourable conditions at the country level relating to the implementation of the objectives of the new country programme. Among the favourable conditions were the political will, the emergence of a civil society that could implement changes in the population sector, the formulation in 1995 of a national population policy and its associated action plan, the establishment of a parliamentary committee on population and development, the importance that national execution had played in the previous country programme, the fact that the country's contraceptive prevalence rate had already reached 25 per cent and, finally, Cape Verde's capacity to utilize effectively the funds being allocated. Among the unfavourable factors were the geographical distance separating the country's islands and the consequent high costs for communication and transportation between islands, the country's poverty, the high fertility rate that resulted in an annual population growth rate estimated at 2.8 per cent and the lack of human resources due to the high turnover of personnel and to emigration.

35. The representative of Cape Verde noted that his country had already started implementing an integrated reproductive health programme and that he was looking forward to even greater achievements during the period of the proposed country programme. Several delegations expressed their support for the proposed programme. One delegation felt that while the programme as a whole was good, there needed to be a more coordinated approach to the activities being proposed under the country programme. Another delegation stressed the need for programme strategies that emphasized capacity-building, especially in a country like Cape Verde, where national execution was already so prominent.

36. The Director of the Africa Division responded that the formulation of the country programme took into account the ICPD Programme of Action and the country's needs as they had been assessed through the PRSD exercise. Emphasis had been given to the programme approach as opposed to the project approach. Moreover, to develop a sense of ownership by the Government it had been closely involved in the process of the PRSD exercise and the formulation of the new country programme.

37. The Executive Board approved the proposed country programme for Cape Verde as presented in document DP/FPA/CP/153 in the amount of $6 million over the five-year period 1996-2000.

Assistance to the Government of Chad (DP/FPA/CP/150)

38. The Director of the Africa Division presented the proposed third country programme for Chad. She outlined the main sectoral objectives of the proposed

programme along with their respective strategies. Attention was paid to the role of UNFPA in advocacy activities that aimed at sensitizing leaders as well as the general public to population issues and to make the national population policy, which was adopted in 1995, more generally known. It was underlined that the challenge of the programme would be to implement the national population policy, the policy declaration on the integration of women into the development process and the population IEC strategy adopted in 1995. UNFPA would continue its close collaboration and coordination with other national and international development partners in the country.

39. One delegation asked for details on the sources of the multi-bilateral funding that was mentioned in the country programme. The delegation of Germany expressed the willingness of his Government to support this effort. Delegations also mentioned the important role that UNFPA had to play in the advocacy sector as a way of strengthening the national capacity to implement the population programme. One delegation that had visited Chad complimented the Fund on the dedication of its staff in that country and stated that the effects of population IEC efforts were apparent.

40. The Director of the Africa Division stated that once the programme had been approved, UNFPA would work through its office in Chad to contact potential bilateral and multilateral donors for help in financing the approved activities. She thanked the delegation of Germany for its support.

41. The Executive Board approved the country programme for Chad as presented in DP/FPA/CP/150 in the amount of $9 million for the five-year period 1996-2000.

Assistance to the Government of Ghana (DP/FPA/CP/151)

42. The Director of the Africa Division introduced the proposed country programme for Ghana, which would be the Fund's third cycle of assistance to that country. She stated that about 70 per cent of the proposed funds would be directed to upgrading and rehabilitating existing health service delivery points so that they could provide integrated reproductive health, including sexual health and family planning services. An adolescent reproductive health programme was to be developed to address the needs of both in-school and out-of-school youth. UNFPA would assist the Government in strengthening the National Population Council and the National Council on Women and Development. In the area of advocacy, the National Population Council would consolidate all existing IEC initiatives under its charge. The National Population Council would therefore be the lead agency in carrying out advocacy efforts to promote the goals of the ICPD, the Fourth World Conference on Women, especially those relating to the girl child, and the removal of obstacles that hindered the realization of women's rights.

43. One delegation mentioned that the quantifiable targets of the proposed programme were not very ambitious and asked the Director to comment. The same delegation also spoke in favour of greater coordination between UNFPA and bilateral programmes. Another delegation spoke in favour of the proposed country programme and observed that the proposed activities of UNFPA complemented those of his own country's bilateral programme quite well. He welcomed the proposed programme's focus on the reproductive health needs of

youth through the provision of family life education and reproductive health services. Another delegation, speaking on behalf of other African delegations, noted that the new country programme would be preceded by a workshop initiated by UNFPA and the National Population Council and that this would help to identify strategies needed to achieve the ICPD goals, to which the Government of Ghana was fully committed and which it expected to achieve. He congratulated UNFPA and the Government of Ghana on the progress that had already been made.

44. The representative of Ghana thanked the delegates for their comments and observed that the proposed country programme would be harmonized with the programming cycles of other United Nations agencies and organizations. He felt confident that the proposed programme would go a long ways towards further integration of population into Ghana's development process.

45. In her reply, the Director observed that the proposed country programme was based on the programme approach and that was why there were less apparent targets for specific sectors. She also added that Ghana had been one of the first to develop a population policy and that the Government had the political will and necessary human resources to implement the proposed programme. National capacity-building was very high on the proposed programme's agenda.

46. The Executive Board approved the proposed country programme for Ghana as presented in DP/FPA/CP/151 in the amount of $25 million over the five-year period 1996-2000.

Extension of, and additional resources for, the country programme for Congo (DP/FPA/1996/16)

47. In introducing the request for the extension of, and additional resources for, the country programme for Congo, the Director of the Africa Division noted that because of socio-political changes and disturbances in the country, only 49 per cent of available funds of the second country programme had been spent by the end of 1995. Therefore, the Fund was requesting an extension of the programme for a bridging period of two years, 1997-1998, as well as increased funding authority of $1.8 million to carry out further activities, mainly in the area of reproductive health and advocacy. Better implementation rates were expected for the remainder of the extended programme in view of increased political stability and programme management capacity.

48. One of the delegations questioned whether it was wise to put more money into the Congo country programme at this juncture, when so much remained to be spent from the ongoing programme. He also questioned the goals of the proposed extension. Other delegations spoke in favour of the proposal. The representative of Congo said that UNFPA and his country had long cooperated in the field of population and that the request for additional resources was justified in that it would help Congo build up its own capacity to carry out population programmes. He reported that his country had undergone some difficult times in recent years and that this was partially responsible for the low level of implementation of the UNFPA programme. However, the situation had now improved greatly and he was confident that the programme could be successfully implemented.

49. The Director of the Africa Division told the Board that the proposed extension was truly a bridging proposal designed to incorporate a broader reproductive health approach into programme activities in Congo. The increase in the number of NGOs and the emergence of private sector initiatives also offered new possibilities to widen the scope of programme implementation and the provision of services that would lead to the development of the next country programme.

50. The Executive Board approved the extension of the Congo country programme for the two-year period 1997-1998 and additional resources in the amount of $1.8 million as presented in document DP/FPA/1996/16.

B. Division for Arab States and Europe

Assistance to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic (DP/FPA/CP/152)

51. The Director of the Division for the Arab States and Europe presented the proposed country programme for the Syrian Arab Republic. She introduced the UNFPA Representative for the Syrian Arab Republic, who would also be available to answer any questions about the proposed programme. In her introduction, the Director stated that this would be the fifth UNFPA country programme in the Syrian Arab Republic and that remarkable progress had been made in the country in the area of population since the Fund had first started working there. The commitment of the Government was shown by the fact that it was making a large financial contribution to the proposed programme. The programme would focus on reproductive health, with 75 per cent of the proposed allocations going to that sector. However, there would also be a focus on the empowerment of women. The laws on gender equality in the Syrian Arab Republic were exemplary but there was still work to be done in putting such equality into practice. In particular, there was a great need to narrow the gap in the illiteracy rates and educational attainment of men and women. There was also a need to reduce the disparity in the reproductive health services available in rural and urban areas. The proposed programme would also have an important segment concerning the reproductive health needs of men and youth, about which she was very optimistic. The Syrian Arab Republic was unique in the Arab world in that it provided both reproductive health education and services for its young people.

52. The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic thanked the Director for her presentation and informed the Board that his Government was firmly committed to the goals of the ICPD. The Government had approved a cash contribution of 35 million Syrian pounds as cost-sharing to the proposed fifth country programme, and some of these funds had already been forwarded to UNFPA. In addition, the Government has earmarked 891 million Syrian pounds in kind to the proposed fifth country programme that would be used for national staff, transportation and overhead expenses of the UNFPA office in the Syrian Arab Republic. He expressed his appreciation for the valuable work the Fund was doing in his country and in the world.

53. The Board approved the proposed country programme for the Syrian Arab Republic as presented in document DP/FPA/CP/152 in the amount of $18 million for the five-year period 1996-2000.

C. Division for Latin America and the Caribbean

Request for extension of, and additional resources for, Bolivia (DP/FPA/1996/2)

54. The Director of the Latin America and the Caribbean Division presented the request for the extension of the Bolivia programme of assistance by one year, until the end of 1996, and the increase in the funding authority by $2 million. She reiterated some of the highlights of the proposed extension as contained in DP/FPA/1996/12, noting that by far the largest share of the proposed additional resources would go to improving reproductive health services in Bolivia and extending the current coverage of those services.

55. The representative of Bolivia expressed the appreciation of his Government for the assistance being provided by UNFPA to his country. The representative highlighted the importance of that assistance in the context of the present social sector reforms, the decentralization process and the implementation of the Popular Participation Law, all of which were currently taking place in Bolivia.

56. The efforts being made by UNFPA to harmonize its programming cycle with that of other JCGP organizations was commended by one delegation, which also requested information regarding the support being provided by UNFPA against the backdrop of the present reforms in the area of decentralization and in implementing the Popular Participation Law.

57. The Director of the Latin America and the Caribbean Division stated that the core of the proposed UNFPA assistance would be provided in the context and support of the ongoing social sector reform. UNFPA was supporting the National Health Secretariat's efforts to decentralize the operation and administration of health services with the aim of providing quality reproductive health services at the municipal level. UNFPA was also supporting the National Education Secretariat in implementing education reform, which included the incorporation of sex education into the curricula and teaching materials of primary schools, as well as by providing training for the pedagogic advisers who implemented the reform at the local level.

58. The Executive Board approved the request for the extension of the country programme for Bolivia through the end of 1996 and for additional resources of $2 million as presented in document DP/FPA/1996/12.

IV. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE UNFPA PUBLICATIONS PROGRAMME

59. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) introduced the report on the effectiveness of UNFPA publications (DP/FPA/1996/14). He noted that public information activities were central to the Fund's mandate as expressed in Economic and Social Council resolution 1763 (LIV) of May 1973 and endorsed by subsequent instruments, including the Programme of Action of the ICPD. He listed the main publications produced, and the languages in which they were produced, to carry out this awareness-raising mandate under both the administrative and programme support services (APSS) budget and the programme budgets, in keeping with Governing Council decision 91/36. He emphasized that

the Fund had been conscious of issues of cost-effectiveness and noted the use of competitive bidding processes and the exploration of new technologies, such as the Fund's World Wide Web site, which was an inexpensive medium for dissemination, as means of achieving economies. He further pointed out that UNFPA publications, which were largely intended for a general readership, did not duplicate, but rather complemented, the publications of other population organizations, such as the United Nations Population Division and The Population Council. He expressed pleasure at readership surveys that indicated that the Fund's publications were read, well received and widely shared, and that they succeeded in reaching specialized and general audiences.

60. Most delegations welcomed the report, although a number of them expressed the desire for more analysis, particularly on the issues of timely distribution of publications and their cost-effectiveness. Several delegations suggested that the Fund submit a forward-looking advocacy and public-information strategy at a future session of the Board. Such a presentation would be more systematic, analytical and strategic than the present report and would also provide more information on the intended audiences, costs and comparative advantages of the various publications, with a view to elaborating clear goals and avoiding duplication. To that end, some delegations suggested that the Fund consider holding informal consultations with Board members and observers and selected non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the coming months.

61. Concerns regarding the report notwithstanding, numerous delegations commended the Fund for the high quality and usefulness of its publications. A number of delegations said they found the Fund's publications to be effective and unique, and some commended the Fund on the progress it had made in increasing and improving the international community's awareness of the role of population in development. Other delegations noted that the methodology of the recently completed reader survey was designed to elicit responses from those who read the publications regularly and had positive responses.

62. Noting that only the State of World Population Report and the Annual Report were published in all six official languages of the United Nations, a number of delegations expressed the desire to see UNFPA publications produced in all the official languages and, in some cases, a greater number of local languages, perhaps through country-based production. Some delegations favoured the increased production and local distribution of publications as well as other information aids that did not rely on the printed word. They stressed that reaching people in developing countries, including in their remotest areas where there was the most need, was not simply a matter of addressing them in an accessible language but through a medium and a message that they could understand and relate to. Addressing the possible increased costs involved, some delegations suggested resources could be freed for those purposes by rationalizing the list of the Fund's technical and research-oriented publications as well as by ensuring that there was no duplication between publications aimed at the same readership. Some delegations raised the question of whether certain publications had become obsolete following the ICPD.

63. While appreciating their usefulness, a number of delegations expressed concern at the time-lag involved in publishing the Inventory of Population Projects in Developing Countries Around the World, the Guide to Sources of

International Population Assistance, and the Global Population Assistance Report. A number wished to see them published in more languages. Some delegations suggested means be found to streamline the data collection process, which was felt to be unwieldy and time-consuming.

64. Many delegations welcomed the Fund's use of the Internet. A number of delegations wanted to see more material in languages other than English. While some suggested that, in some instances, the Internet might prove a less costly alternative to publication, others cautioned against over-reliance on electronic dissemination since vast populations in developing countries lacked access to computers. Questions were raised as to the cost-effectiveness of using sound and graphics on the Web site. Some delegations also raised questions regarding the Fund's envisioned future use of the Internet and suggested that the Fund consult delegations on an informal basis.

65. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) thanked delegations for their comments. He was joined in his response by the Director, Information and External Relations Division, and the Chief, Editorial, Publications and Media Services Branch. They welcomed delegations' suggestions for more critical analysis, a forward-looking strategy and the use of cost-benefit analysis of the Fund's publications programme. They agreed on the need to reach populations that were physically, socially or culturally isolated, not only with publications but with non-print media, such as radio and television, as well. To an overwhelming extent, communication was seen as taking place at the local level, and the Fund tried to stimulate production and dissemination, at the country and local levels, of print, visual and audio-visual information materials. In addition, programme-specific information, education and communication (IEC) received some 19-20 per cent of country programme funds, and the Fund is looking at ways to optimize use of these resources in support of advocacy objectives.

66. The administration noted that the potential to increase distribution was limited only by the financial and personnel resources at the Fund's disposal. Nevertheless, the stock of information material distributed had increased from around one quarter of a million items in 1991 to half a million in 1995, without any increase in staff. Cost-effectiveness per se can be difficult to determine, but costs could be controlled. The administration explained that the role of the Information and External Relations Division was to manage, not to produce, information materials, hence costs were controlled through, for example, the competitive-bidding process. Such design and production work as was done in-house using modern, less costly technology than previously available was performed by re-trained, not new, staff members.

67. UNFPA was looking into the possibility of developing a common database to streamline the process and reduce the costs of data collection for the Inventory, Guide, and Global Population Assistance Report and was exploring the options for posting their contents on the Internet.

68. The administration explained that the UNFPA World Wide Web site was still at an early stage. It assured delegations that languages other than English would be used in its Internet postings as the technology permitted; that it would exploit the Internet's potential for synergies based on a realistic

assessment of the outreach of the medium, which was still quite limited; that, so far, it had used the Internet mainly to make available already published materials at low cost; and that it would balance the costs and benefits of using graphics and sound. By increasing collaboration with other organizations using the Internet in similar ways, it hoped to achieve economies in enhancing its own capabilities and to be able to monitor actual use of the Web site.

69. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/18. Publications programme of the United Nations Population Fund

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the Executive Director on the effectiveness of the publications programme of the United Nations Population Fund (DP/FPA/1996/14) and reaffirms the importance of information and advocacy activities that should enable the promotion of increased awareness and better understanding of Fund activities;

2. Also takes note of the efforts undertaken by the United Nations Population Fund to make most of its publications available in different languages and requests the Executive Director also to take into consideration the linguistic balances in developing the electronic dissemination of information;

3. Encourages the Executive Director to give special attention to the needs of the Information and External Relations Division publications programme to support information, education and communication efforts at the national and local levels with appropriate means;

4. Requests the Executive Director, in order to strengthen the publications of the United Nations Population Fund, to further develop policy and strategy in the area of communication and information, in the context of the role of the United Nations Population Fund in advocacy and in consultation with the members of the Board as well as with observers and non-governmental organizations, which takes account of the need to prioritize its publications with special attention to the content of other publications of the United Nations and the financial and human constraints of the Fund;

5. Also requests the Executive Director to submit to the Executive Board the strategy referred to in paragraph 4 above prior to the session that will examine the biennial budget estimates for 1998-1999 for administrative and programme support services;

6. Further requests the Executive Director to present in the document concerning the presentation of the biennial budget estimates for 1998-1999 detailed costs of publications, including information on the distribution of publications;

7. Requests the Executive Director to examine and to propose to the Executive Board recommendations to facilitate the timely collection and dissemination of current data contained in the Inventory of Population Projects in Developing Countries Around the World and of the Guide to Sources of International Population Assistance.

28 March 1996

V. ROLE OF UNFPA IN ASSESSING AND MEETING CONTRACEPTIVE REQUIREMENTS AND LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT NEEDS

70. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) introduced the report on "the future role of UNFPA in assessing and meeting the unmet needs for contraceptives and the requirements for logistics management" (DP/FPA/1996/2). He noted that the report outlined both the past achievements for the years 1990-1995 of the Global Initiative on Contraceptive Requirements and Logistics Management Needs in Developing Countries and its plan of action for the years 1996-1999. The Global Initiative had completed 11 out of 12 in-depth country studies that it had undertaken: the final study could not be completed because of a national strike in the country involved.

71. Other accomplishments of the Global Initiative included: (a) in-depth studies in three additional countries, Dominican Republic, Haiti and Morocco, and a follow-up study in India; (b) publication of a number of technical reports, including those of the in-depth studies; and (c) a database on donor-supported contraceptive commodities. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) further noted that the plan of action of the Global Initiative for the years 1996-1999 was in continuity with its past activities and in line with the recently approved Global Contraceptive Commodity Programme in assisting countries with known logistics problems and in the need for strengthening national capacity-building in developing countries. These planned activities included: (a) training in the forecasting techniques of contraceptive requirements and logistics management; (b) conducting mid-term follow-up studies to the case-studies already completed; (c) developing and refining the contraceptive commodity database in order to include more prospective data; and (d) organizing more in-depth studies, giving priority to sub-Saharan African countries and least developed countries.

72. Numerous delegations welcomed and supported the activities of the Global Initiative. Some delegations emphasized the need to establish close links with the recently approved Global Contraceptive Commodity Programme (decision 96/03) and stated that the proposal for training in contraceptive forecasting techniques should be more needs-based. Some delegations stressed that the work of the Global Initiative should be undertaken within the broader context of reproductive health, and its technical services should be made available to all countries. It was also suggested by some delegations that in carrying out 12 in-depth country studies, the Global Initiative must have established a model that could be used in conducting future in-depth studies at lower cost and with fewer personnel.

73. In response to the suggestions made by the Executive Board, the Deputy Executive Director (Programme) re-emphasized that the Global Initiative operated within the broader framework of reproductive health by: (a) enabling men and women, particularly women, to make informed choices and (b) helping to find the right mix of contraceptive methods to achieve desired results. He further noted that estimating contraceptive requirements not only to serve family planning needs but for HIV/AIDS prevention programmes as well had broadened the scope of the Global Initiative. Future coordination with the Global Contraceptive Commodity Programme would aim primarily at building national capacity to assess the needs of couples and individuals and to improve and strengthen contraceptive logistics management. He also noted that such assessments would become an integral part of PRSD exercises.

74. The Executive Board approved the following decision:

96/14. Role of the United Nations Population Fund in assessing and meeting contraceptive requirements and logistics management needs

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the Executive Director on the future role of the United Nations Population Fund in assessing and meeting the unmet needs for contraceptives and the requirements for logistics management (DP/FPA/1996/2);

2. Endorses the proposed future activities of the Global Initiative on Contraceptive Requirements and Logistics Management Needs in the Developing Countries in the 1990s;

3. Requests the Executive Director to submit a progress report on the activities of the Global Initiative as part of her annual report.

26 March 1996

VI. MEMBERSHIP IN THE UNICEF/WHO JOINT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH POLICY

75. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) introduced the background note on possible membership of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board in the Joint Committee on Health Policy (JCHP) of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) (DP/FPA/1996/5), which had been prepared in response to the request of the Executive Board at its annual session 1995. He provided an overview of the composition, history and activities of the Joint Committee as an advisory body that helped to enhance coordination in the health policies of WHO and UNICEF. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) emphasized that participation of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board in the Joint Committee would provide the only intergovernmental mechanism for the discussion of health policy concerns common to WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA and

would be especially helpful in achieving the health and related social goals put forward by recent international conferences and summits.

76. Several delegations noted their appreciation that UNFPA was working to increase coordination with UNICEF and WHO and acknowledged the importance of extending such collaboration to the intergovernmental level. One delegation noted the usefulness of the Board's membership in the JCHP but emphasized the need for a revitalization of the JCHP in which UNFPA could play an important role. Another delegation supported the proposal in order to ensure that JCHP would undertake appropriate actions in the area of reproductive health.

77. However, some delegations expressed reservations about the effectiveness of the JCHP and the usefulness of the Board's participation. One delegation suggested that the agenda of the Joint Committee should be reduced, rather than expanded. A number of delegations requested more information on the experiences of current JCHP members and the advantages of the Board's membership in the Committee. One delegation suggested that in order to facilitate the decision of the Board UNFPA could provide specific examples of areas where joint recommendations from JCHP would be helpful.

78. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) thanked the members of the Executive Board for their comments and suggestions. He noted the overall agreement of all delegations with the need for improved collaboration at the intergovernmental level. In view of the reservations expressed by several delegations, he invited further review by the Board of experiences with the Joint Committee in order to assess the benefits of its membership.

79. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/17. Inter-agency coordination in health policy and programming

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the background note on possible membership of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund in the Joint Committee on Health Policy of the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Health Organization (DP/FPA/1996/5);

2. Reaffirms the need for close collaboration at all levels among the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Population Fund on matters of mutual interest and related activities, including, inter alia, issues relating to follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development;

3. Encourages the Executive Director to explore ways to further strengthen inter-agency coordination in the area of health policy and programming, in particular with the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Health Organization, in order to develop coordinated health policies and programmes, including reproductive health, in the context of the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development;

4. Invites the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund to present an oral report to the Executive Board at its third regular session in 1996 on steps undertaken to implement the present decision.

28 March 1996

UNDP/UNFPA JOINT SEGMENT

VII. UNDP/UNFPA: HARMONIZATION OF PRESENTATION OF BUDGETS AND ACCOUNTS

80. The UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Finance and Administration, on behalf of UNDP and UNFPA, addressed the Executive Board in an oral report on budget harmonization. He noted that UNICEF would present a similar oral report at its Executive Board session in April 1996.

81. He outlined the context of UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board decision 95/30 and UNICEF Executive Board decision 1995/37 on budget harmonization, which had led to the oral report at the present session.

82. Internal working documents on the comparison of budget presentations were available to the Executive Board.

83. In summarizing the actions taken to date, the Assistant Administrator noted that in 1995, a detailed comparison of budget presentations, based on the 1994-1995 initial budget estimates of UNDP, UNFPA, and UNICEF, had been completed. The study had revealed that the budget presentations of UNDP and UNFPA were harmonized to a large extent and were in line with the budget presentation of the United Nations. While UNDP had initially based its budget presentation on that of the United Nations, and UNFPA had subsequently revised its budget presentation to harmonize it with that of UNDP and the United Nations, UNICEF had developed its budget presentation independently. The study showed material differences in content, definition of concepts and presentation between the budgets of UNDP and UNFPA, and those of UNICEF.

84. However, during 1994, UNICEF had undertaken a major management review, which among other things, recommended that UNICEF adopt what was called an integrated budget approach, entailing fundamental changes in the scope and content of its budget presentation. The UNICEF Executive Board had endorsed those recommendations in September 1995 and agreed that UNICEF would initially present a 1996-1997 budget covering its headquarters and regional offices only, in the new format, to be considered by its Board in April 1996. Thus, the earlier comparison based on the 1994-1995 budget estimates was rendered obsolete.

85. A new comparison based on 1996-1997 budget estimates for the three organizations could be undertaken only when UNICEF had prepared its 1996-1997 budget for headquarters and regional offices, a document that had been finalized in mid-February 1996. Since that time, a preliminary comparison of the budgets of the three organizations had been completed. The comparison covered headquarters activities only. A comparison of field activities would be

undertaken in 1997, when UNICEF had prepared its field budget for the first time in the new format. He noted that the comparison was based on the proposed budget of UNICEF, which had not yet been approved by its Executive Board.

86. The preliminary comparison indicated that the differences between UNICEF on the one hand, and UNDP and UNFPA on the other, might not have narrowed. The differences concerned not only the presentation but also the scope and content of the budget. Moreover, the inherent differences in the nature of the organizations needed to be taken into consideration. More work was thus needed in order to present to the respective Executive Boards a comprehensive picture of the substantive issues involved.

87. With regard to the timing and nature of future reports to the Executive Boards, UNDP and UNFPA would present another oral progress report at the annual session 1996 together with working papers as needed. An account of the debate on the issue was also to be reported to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session in June/July 1996. The Assistant Administrator noted that the annual session of UNICEF would not have taken place in time for reporting to the Economic and Social Council session nor would it have proposals for the budgets of its field offices. It thus seemed impractical to have proposals reviewed by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in time for the third regular session 1996, to be held in September, as requested by the Executive Board, since the documentation would have to be ready by May 1996 at the same time or prior to the annual Executive Board session. He suggested that the presentation of the initial proposals to the Executive Board be made in January 1997 at the first regular session 1997 rather than at the third regular session 1996. However, if the Board wished, another oral progress report could be presented at the third regular session 1996.

88. One delegation thanked the Assistant Administrator for an excellent statement, the work done so far and expressed appreciation for the working papers made available. It was a good starting point to see where harmonization was possible. The delegation, supported by others, underlined the goal of harmonization of budgets to make them more similar so as to promote understanding and support good decision-making. The similarities must go beyond content and presentation styles to encompass the underlying principles of the preparation of accounts and estimates. All budget documents must be upgraded while recognizing that more similarity would not mean sameness but that variances from the harmonization norm should be clearly indicated in the budget documents. The efforts to harmonize budgets must include: a common definition and usage of budget terms (i.e., the same words must mean the same thing from one budget to the next); commonly accepted accounting approaches and policies; disclosure of basic key information (e.g., on the use of funds, a breakdown of overhead costs, programme delivery costs and programme costs and, within those, a breakdown of salaries versus operating costs, and again, within those, a breakdown of Professional and non-Professional staff); minimum requirements for content, such as the same types of tables with similar kinds of breakdowns and roll-ups; and a common presentation style, ideally one budget document that consolidated the regular budget and extrabudgetary resources and, as a minimum, a summary table that consolidated the global financial plan of the organization. The harmonization of budgets must lead to simplification, visibility, completeness and comparability.

89. Other delegations asked for adherence to the reporting schedule determined by the Executive Board, even if progress could not go as far as envisaged, in order to comply with national auditing requirements. The Economic and Social Council session would also provide an opportunity for discussion among the members of the different Executive Boards.

90. The Executive Board took note of the oral progress report on harmonization of budgets and accounts.

VIII. UNDP/UNFPA: THE JOINT UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)

91. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS) introduced the report of the Administrator on UNDP support for and collaboration with the United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) (DP/1996/10).

92. He noted the progress by UNAIDS and its co-sponsors in setting up a framework to support programme countries to address the challenges posed by the epidemic. UNDP resident representatives, in their role as resident coordinators, were facilitating the work of UNAIDS at the country level, in particular through the creation of United Nations theme groups on HIV/AIDS, of which 65 were now in existence.

93. The Assistant Administrator highlighted the decisions taken at the last meeting of the Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) of UNAIDS, held in Geneva from 13-15 November 1995. The PCB had: endorsed the UNAIDS Strategic Plan for 1996-2000 and a prospective mode of operations at the country level; approved the budget for UNAIDS for the biennium 1996-1997 at $120 million; established two working groups, one on performance monitoring and evaluation, chaired by the United States and the other on resource mobilization, chaired by Sweden; and taken note of the "Global Appeal", which would raise funds for UNAIDS activities included in the biennial programme budget and a plan for co-sponsors' activities to be agreed jointly with UNAIDS, for up to $20 million for 1996-1997. Members of the PCB who also served on governing bodies of the co-sponsoring organizations were invited to pay special attention to financing HIV/AIDS-related activities of the co-sponsors from core and extrabudgetary funds.

94. In that regard, UNDP planned to devote a substantial amount of attention to the development of methodology in innovative programming and backstopping of country offices. The Assistant Administrator stated that in the 1996-1997 biennium budget only one core post had been allocated to the headquarters programme. He stated that he was committed to finding further core resources through a possible reallocation of current budgetary resources. However, he emphasized the need for extrabudgetary resources in order to continue support to the country offices. He noted that more than 90 per cent of the resources spent at headquarters in HIV and development came from extrabudgetary funding.

95. Country-level activities were focused primarily on capacity-building, tailored to each country's needs. UNDP and UNAIDS were finalizing their working

arrangements at the country level, in particular with reference to the logistical and administrative support and financial services to be provided by UNDP. Some of those services would form part of an in-kind contribution to UNAIDS and others would be administered by UNDP at the request of UNAIDS. It would also be determined how UNDP programme staff in country offices, in particular those working on HIV and development, would assist UNAIDS.

96. At the regional level, the first study of HIV/AIDS and development implications in the Pacific had been published in Fiji, entitled "Time to Act: the Pacific Response to HIV/AIDS".

97. The Chief, Technical and Evaluation Division, introduced the report on "UNFPA support for and collaboration in the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)" (DP/FPA/1996/4). He noted that the document had been prepared for the first regular session of the Executive Board and did not include the latest information from the recently published AIDS Update 1995, copies of which were available at the current session of the Board. He added that the French and Spanish versions of the AIDS Update 1995 would be available shortly. He explained that as one of the six co-sponsors of UNAIDS, UNFPA had been fully involved in the process of its development over the past two years. At the same time, UNFPA had taken care to ensure that support for HIV/AIDS prevention was not diminished at the country level. He explained that in 1995 UNFPA had supported HIV/AIDS prevention activities (including supply and distribution of condoms, HIV/AIDS IEC activities, and HIV/AIDS training) in 114 countries as compared to 103 in 1994. The financial support of UNFPA for HIV/AIDS prevention activities was provisionally estimated at $20 million in 1995, compared to an estimated $15.5 million in 1994.

98. The Chief, Technical and Evaluation Division, said that UNFPA would continue to provide support in line with national AIDS prevention and control programmes and within the context of the theme group mechanism being set up at the country level by UNAIDS. At the global level, UNFPA would not propose additional activities but rather looked to UNAIDS, in collaboration with the Reproductive Health Programme of WHO, to address the key policy, strategy, technical, research and development and training issues in regard to HIV/AIDS in the broader framework of reproductive health. He stressed that UNFPA support to UNAIDS went beyond advocacy and included the following actions: since the end of 1994 UNFPA had seconded a staff member to UNAIDS; UNFPA had provided a grant to the HIV/AIDS task force for the production of the biennial report on global activities; and the Executive Board at its third regular session 1995 had approved, as part of the Fund's intercountry programme for 1996-1999, an expansion of UNFPA support to UNAIDS over the next four years.

99. The Director of External Relations for UNAIDS underlined the need for the governing bodies of co-sponsoring organizations to give their firm commitment to UNAIDS. She welcomed the opportunity to exchange information on joint activities.. Calling UNAIDS a pioneer for United Nations reform, she noted that the tripartite PCB was unique in that it included five non-governmental organizations as members. She emphasized the priorities of coordination, harmonization of policies, mutual administrative support, and information-sharing among the co-sponsors and UNAIDS. The aim of UNAIDS was to mobilize

resources for a synergistic effect, not to take over the individual roles of the co-sponsors.

100. UNAIDS would be staffed by 53 Professional posts and 38 General Service posts at its headquarters in Geneva. Thirty-four Professional and 32 General Service posts had already been filled. UNAIDS planned to assign country programme advisers (CPAs) to work under the supervision of the chairs of the country-level theme groups. Of the 45 planned as the initial number of CPAs, 11 had already been assigned. Of a planned 29 intercountry technical advisers, one had been assigned. UNAIDS was considering the possibility of using staff involved in HIV/AIDS activities from co-sponsoring organizations to fulfil CPA duties in those countries in which CPAs were not posted.

101. UNAIDS looked to UNDP for leadership at the country level through the resident coordinator system. In addition to the negotiation of the agreement on the provision of administrative and logistical support referred to by the Assistant Administrator, UNAIDS was considering outposting a representative to the Office for United Nations System Support and Services (OUNS) in New York.

102. A memorandum of understanding had been signed by the six executive heads of co-sponsoring organizations on cooperation between the organizations and UNAIDS. Copies were made available to the Executive Board.

103. The committee of co-sponsoring organizations (CCO) would meet on 24 April 1996 in New York under the chairmanship of the UNICEF Executive Director. A resumed meeting of the CCO was planned during the first regular session of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), to be held in Nairobi on 28 and 29 April 1996. The programme coordinating board would meet in Geneva on 10 and 11 June 1996.

104. One delegation, on behalf of 11 others, reiterating the seriousness of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, thanked the organizations for their presentations and welcomed UNAIDS as an innovative United Nations response that should make an effective contribution to programme countries. Coordination among the co-sponsors and UNAIDS must be ensured. However, the item, postponed twice, should have been considered earlier by the Executive Board. He noted that document DP/1996/10 lacked information on the specific commitment of UNDP to UNAIDS, particularly the amount of financing for AIDS activities in 1996-1997 and the modus operandi for work in country offices. Moreover, the question was raised about the signing of a UNDP/UNAIDS joint arrangement.

105. Several delegations, including the first speaker, asked for clarification of the role of the 22 UNDP national professional officers (NPOs) for HIV and development, whose posts had been approved by the Executive Board in its decision 94/6. One representative questioned the slow recruitment of an NPO in his country.

106. One delegation emphasized that the work of UNDP and UNFPA highlighted the developmental aspect of the United Nations work to combat HIV/AIDS. The speaker also questioned how coordination by the resident coordinator could be strengthened in that area. A common responsibility of the co-sponsors for financing UNAIDS was also underlined.

107. One delegation, speaking on behalf of numerous delegations, commended UNFPA efforts in the area of HIV/AIDS prevention, and expressed satisfaction with UNFPA working relationship with UNAIDS. Several other delegations commended UNFPA support for HIV/AIDS prevention activities at the country level as outlined in the AIDS Update 1995.

108. One speaker, also on behalf of another, said that the documents were lacking information but that the oral reports had supplemented them satisfactorily. UNAIDS must have a real impact in the fight against HIV/AIDS. The speaker asked if part of the country allocation could be used for programme work in HIV/AIDS.

109. Support was expressed for the memorandum of understanding between UNAIDS and its co-sponsors as a basis for future work, as well as for the participation of UNAIDS representatives in future Executive Board sessions.

110. In response, the Assistant Administrator thanked the speakers for their comments. He regretted the postponement by the Executive Board of consideration of the item and noted that information had nevertheless been distributed at the previous sessions. He stated that the UNDP commitment to UNAIDS would be drawn from different sources. The core budget of UNDP for programme activities managed at the global level would amount to over $500,000 during 1996-1997. However, an additional $3.5 million in extrabudgetary funds would be required.

111. In addition, one staff member financed from the UNDP core budget had been seconded to UNAIDS. Through individual country indicative planning figures and regional allocations, some $125 million was being allocated for fifth programming cycle programmes. However, a figure for the future allocation at the country level was difficult to ascertain although it had been indicated that many country offices would have HIV/AIDS components. Special regional programmes could also be formulated. As the national professional officers were core staff they could not be assigned as UNAIDS staff, but could and would support its work. Specific forms of that support would be discussed on a case-by-case basis with UNAIDS. The Executive Board had approved the NPOs with the intention of using national expertise more fully and because of their cost-effectiveness. The Board had also directed UNDP to ensure that their terms of reference be reviewed to make their role compatible with the work of UNAIDS. He expected that the situation in the one country to which an NPO had been allocated but not yet assigned would soon be resolved.

112. The Director of External Relations of UNAIDS referred to the 11 March 1996 letter from the UNAIDS Director addressed to the Administrator regarding negotiations on the role of NPOs vis-à-vis UNAIDS. The intention was that NPOs in countries without CPAs would function as UNAIDS CPAs part of the time. UNAIDS would in turn provide training, support, and equipment as needed. The role of NPOs would be identified in the broader framework to be elaborated.

113. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/16. Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)

The Executive Board

1. Welcomes the reports prepared and the oral presentations made by the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Development Programme covering their support to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), in particular at the country level, and reaffirms the importance of collective and concerted action on HIV/AIDS by all the co-sponsoring agencies and coordinated through the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS;

2. Requests the United Nations Development Programme to conclude without delay arrangements with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS relating to the financial, administrative and logistical support to work in the area of HIV/AIDS as well as to clarify the role and function of the national programme officers appointed to provide support to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS in accordance with Executive Board decision 94/6;

3. Recommends that the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS be given the opportunity to brief the Executive Board on its activities during the joint UNDP/UNFPA segment at the annual session 1996.

28 March 1996

UNDP SEGMENT

IX. AGENCY SUPPORT COSTS

114. The Associate Administrator introduced the two reports prepared for the item: the report on the financial status of agency support costs (DP/1995/49), originally prepared for the third regular session 1995 and that on the implementation of the support cost components of the successor programming arrangements approved under Executive Board decision 95/23 (DP/1996/13). An informal paper that helped to clarify some of the more technical aspects of the subject was also distributed during the session.

115. The Associate Administrator summarized the objectives and the facilities of the support cost arrangements that had been introduced during the fifth programming cycle. He clarified that those facilities would continue to operate in the next programming period and would be modified only to the extent necessary to reflect experience during the fifth cycle and to conform with the support cost provisions of the successor programming arrangements. That included the consolidation of financial earmarkings into three major lines, replacing the nine separate lines used in the fifth cycle.

116. He highlighted the major changes for the next programming period. First, United Nations system support for policy and programme development (SPPD) (a similar facility to technical support services at the programme level (TSS-1), used for upstream technical support) had now been extended to regional commissions. Secondly, in light of fifth cycle experience, SPPD management was being decentralized to country offices, with allocations to be made under the

resource assignment procedures for the successor programming arrangements. Finally, because the cluster rates of administrative and operational services (AOS) reimbursement for large agencies had proven cumbersome during the fifth cycle, especially at the country level, simplification was recommended. That would involve a uniform 10 per cent AOS reimbursement rate for the larger agencies.

117. Many speakers were pleased to note that the support cost system introduced in the fifth cycle had contributed to the significant increase in national execution during the period as well as to a more focused application of agency technical support. One representative suggested that with the reduced role of UNDP as a central funding agency, and the shifting nature of agency support under national execution, it might be necessary for UNDP to review existing overall support cost arrangements. The basic question remained how to reinforce the agencies as centres of excellence and a valuable source of expertise for programme countries while at the same time ensuring the best quality and price of such services, on a more competitive basis.

118. Several delegations pointed out that some of the mid-term review reports had recommended the expansion of the technical support facilities to a wider range of agents. That would permit national institutions, non-governmental organizations, private sector and development banks, among others, to be directly reimbursed, without necessarily going through a specialized agency. Launching the successor programming arrangements might offer an ideal opportunity to introduce such an expansion.

119. Speakers appreciated that the proposals contained in document DP/1996/13 represented an adaptation of the current support cost system, based on actual experience during the fifth cycle. For instance, one delegation commented that the positioning of upstream technical support was now much clearer, but it was necessary to increase consultations with Governments to focus that support more directly on country programming priorities. Similarly, technical support at the project level remained critical to ensure that sound technical backstopping from agencies was available for national execution.

120. Clarification was sought on what action was required of the Executive Board at the current session. Many delegations felt that the proposals were acceptable and feasible but also wanted to hear the views of specialized agencies. One representative requested information on how the agencies allocated funds for their participation in UNDP activities.

121. While delegations were grateful for the explanations provided in the introduction and the informal paper, many requested additional information on a number of technical aspects. Several speakers queried the basis for the proposed earmarkings for both the large and small agencies and for the regional commissions and how those amounts related to actual country needs that would emerge during the programming process. One delegation asked whether upstream technical support needed to be limited to sustainable human development activities.

122. Many speakers supported the proposal to simplify AOS for large agencies by replacing the cluster rates for different project components (which currently

averaged 10 per cent) with a uniform 10 per cent reimbursement rate. However, one speaker queried the basis for establishing AOS reimbursement rates, in comparison to the rates used by other entities, for instance: the 13 per cent paid to smaller agencies (which could rise to 22 per cent with flexibility provisions) and the 10 per cent average rate paid to large agencies, as compared to the rates charged by the Office for Project Services and the trust funds, and on cost-shared activities. One speaker requested a fuller explanation of the existing flexibility provisions and another asked whether diseconomies of scale were measured on project size or volume. One representative wondered whether a uniform rate of reimbursement might inadvertently serve as an incentive to inflate the size of projects. Another speaker asked whether AOS applied to the cost-sharing components of UNDP projects.

123. One delegation wanted to know how the allocation of SPPD resources would affect the distribution of country resources to regions and to low-income and least developed countries. He also sought clarification on how the regional commissions were included in the support cost system.

124. In response to the issues raised, the Associate Administrator clarified that the Executive Board could take note of the financial status of support costs as contained in document DP/1995/49. As regarded document DP/1996/13, the Executive Board might wish to note how the support cost system was being streamlined in line with its decision 95/23 on the successor programming arrangements, and the fifth cycle experience. The proposal for a 10 per cent uniform reimbursement rate for large agencies would be subject to Executive Board approval.

125. The Associate Administrator emphasized that the earmarkings presented in document DP/1996/13 were notional, and would be adjusted in response to actual demand for the different windows of services. He confirmed that SPPD had been expanded to include regional commissions under decision 95/23 and related document DP/1995/32. Their earmarking represented a notional estimate of demand in the first round. As for the involvement of non-governmental organizations and other potential implementation agents, there remained a number of ways in which they could, and did, become involved in UNDP-funded activities. He also confirmed that support cost resources would be allocated by regional bureaux for distribution in conformity with decision 95/23.

126. Continuing, he recalled that the recent evaluation of national execution called for an enhancement of the participation of United Nations agencies. He emphasized that while the support cost system was intended to help programme countries to access the knowledge of specialized agencies and regional commissions, it also permitted those entities to amplify their expertise through participation in operational activities in their areas of competence. In recognition of that dual benefit, the support cost system had always involved a sharing of costs between the agencies and UNDP. For instance, under TSS-1, UNDP covered about two thirds of the associated costs, and in AOS, UNDP covered an average of 10 per cent as against total costs, which varied between 21 and 22 per cent. For the smaller agencies, the flexibility provisions compensated for the diseconomies of scale associated with involvement in a limited number of projects.

127. In moving to a uniform rate of reimbursement (in lieu of cluster rates) for the large agencies, the cost measurement systems would still be maintained, as they provided valuable monitoring information for possible future adjustments of rates. He clarified that UNDP consulted regularly with the agencies on those matters, noting that representatives of agencies present might wish to comment further.

128. The Director of the Division for Resources Planning and Coordination of the Bureau for Resources and External Affairs recalled that under the former support cost system, agencies could be involved at all stages of projects, but would be reimbursed support costs based only on their involvement at the implementation stage, calculated at 13 per cent of project expenditures. The former system was obviously unsuited to national execution, where it was desirable to distinguish technical support for formulation and backstopping from administrative and operational services. With the introduction of the new support cost regime in the fifth cycle, those objectives had been largely achieved through increasing use of national execution and implementation, and more focused technical service contributions from the agencies.

129. When the new regime was developed for AOS in the fifth cycle, it was considered advisable to establish a cluster of reimbursement rates to reflect the varying labour intensiveness of different project components. The mix of project inputs had been changing over time, and UNDP now operated a weighted system that covered a maximum of 10 per cent of the 21-22 per cent total costs. The cluster system, however, had proven cumbersome, particularly for country offices. Given that UNDP reimbursed less than half of the total costs and that the overall volume of AOS was much less than originally expected, the usefulness of fine tuning had become questionable. By reverting to a uniform rate, the advantages of separating technical and administrative services were still maintained, and an aspect that added little value could be eliminated. The Director added that ex post facto costing reports could be made available to interested delegations.

130. He confirmed that under national execution, any amount set aside for AOS that was not paid to agencies continued to revert to Governments for programming. The difference under the successor programming arrangements was that the norm for national implementation was expected to be at least 50 per cent.

131. TSS-1 (now SPPD) was considered a successful feature of the support cost system and was linked with the resource assignment process of the successor programming arrangements. That enabled the resident representative to link agency technical services to the nature of programmes being developed. During the fifth cycle, it was also possible for agencies to utilize national expertise and to support national workshops to disseminate the results of the upstream studies carried out.

132. The President invited the representatives of agencies present to comment briefly on the issues raised. The representative from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) reported that the objectives of the support cost arrangements were being met as the involvement of FAO in project execution had dropped to one third of 1992 levels while involvement in

implementation under national execution had doubled in the same period. He emphasized that the modifications currently being proposed to the system did not compromise the basic principles and objectives but rather reinforced the focus and the demand-driven features. He added that FAO would, in any case, be maintaining the cost measurement system for its own internal needs.

133. The representative of the International Labour Organization also confirmed that the trend in agencies was to focus on technical support and less on the administrative side of projects and reiterated the need for UNDP and the agencies to enhance their strategic relationships. He also cautioned that in assessing different support cost rates it was a complex matter to ensure that cost-effectiveness was being measured on a comparable basis.

134. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/23. Agency support costs

The Executive Board

1. Requests the Administrator to prepare a conference room paper on the agency support costs system;

2. Decides that the Executive Board will consider the proposals contained in documents DP/1996/13 and DP/1995/49 and the additional information requested in paragraph 1 above at its annual session 1996.

29 March 1996

X. COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS: REPORTS ON MID-TERM REVIEWS

Overview

135. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support introduced document DP/1996/12, an overview of the reports on mid-term reviews, and DP/1996/12/Add.1-5, containing mid-term reviews of selected countries. The reports represented the fifth and last of a series of mid-term reviews of fifth cycle country and intercountry programmes undertaken during 1993 to 1995.

136. Fifth cycle country programmes had been consistent with the directives of Executive Board decisions 90/34 and 94/14 with respect to the UNDP areas of focus. The next set of country cooperation frameworks were expected to be even better focused on sustainable human development priorities. National execution remained the preferred modality for UNDP-assisted cooperation. Both the mid-term reviews and a formal evaluation of national execution in mid-1995 indicated that the modality was useful in addressing the broad UNDP goals of sustainability, capacity-building and cost-effectiveness. A simplified and coherent system of national execution based on decentralized programme management, including the participation of civil society organizations, was being developed for use by the end of 1996.

137. The widely adopted programme approach modality was useful in coordinating external cooperation and integrating it into national programmes. It had, however, been less successful as a tool for resource mobilization. Work was under way to simplify the programme support and programme implementation instruments and it was hoped that donors would be willing to support national programmes through the programme approach framework in the future. A new system-wide programme approach training module had been developed by the Turin Centre of the International Labour Organization.

138. Capacity development remained the central objective for the majority of UNDP-assisted programmes, a goal that would continue to be highlighted under the successor programming arrangements. UNDP would work closely with Governments to improve public service and incentive systems. The mid-term reviews indicated that the failure by most countries to develop and retain public sector capacity was directly related to low salaries and less-than-optimal service conditions in that sector.

139. The review also highlighted the importance of developing clear monitoring and review systems for UNDP-assisted programmes. The UNDP Office for Evaluation and Strategic Planning, with the regional bureaux, was developing a methodology for progress indicators and impact assessment.

140. Several delegations questioned why the report on mid-term reviews would be the last when there were still some reviews to be undertaken in 1996. It was also queried if the procedures for mid-term reviews were too complicated, leading to the delay in their completion. New review measures would need to be developed by UNDP for the next series of country cooperation frameworks. It was underlined that the present format, used since 1992, must be revised, with the suggestion that information on the four UNDP focus areas, programme impact, resource mobilization, and analysis of linkages among those factors be included.

141. One delegation underlined the importance of incorporating information on the impact and sustainability of country programmes in the mid-term reviews, as the sample mid-term reviews had very little analysis of the impact of the programmes in those countries. The documents were descriptive and included many statistics, but not enough analysis, in his country's view. Moreover, there was little discussion of multi-bi cooperation, except in the report on the mid-term review of Brazil (DP/1996/12/Add.4) in its reference to cost-sharing.

142. One delegation queried whether there had been any analysis of implementation of recommendations emanating from previous mid-term reviews. Another suggested that the country under review be invited to participate in the headquarters-based discussions of the mid-term review, an experience that had been successful in the past. Increased training opportunities for people in programme countries was also advocated. Capacity-building should be emphasized at all levels, including provincial and local.

143. Several delegations emphasized as a major criterion the need for evaluation of success in poverty eradication in country programmes. Capacity development was the key role of UNDP although it was noted that the report offered explanations on why there were constraints in achieving sustainable human development. However, UNDP programmes must aim to enrich the lives of the

poorest people, creating sustainability in a real sense. UNDP must have patience and courage to deal with poverty-stricken areas.

144. The reports demonstrated that problems were faced in implementing national execution and the programme approach, a factor on which there must be regular follow-up by the appropriate authorities in UNDP. The programme approach offered a coordinated framework and greater programme impact. One speaker stated that the programme approach needed to be implemented gradually, also stressing the lead role of the Government as a factor in more successful country programming.

145. While advocating the contribution of funds and technology by donors to boost use of the programme approach, one delegation acknowledged that it was not always a simple task, as was outlined in paragraph 25 of the overview. Increased effectiveness and coordination, including in technical cooperation among developing countries and through United Nations reform, needed to be demonstrated in order to attract sustainable funding by donors. It was suggested that UNDP undertake a study of the potential sustainability of multi-bi cooperation. Donor support went beyond fund-raising, in his Government's view, and the comparative advantages of each donor must be carefully studied.

146. More information was sought on the use and mobilization of non-core resources, specifically cost-sharing. It was advocated that terms of reference for use of that modality be developed. Some delegations queried the need, mentioned in paragraph 28 (b) of document DP/1996/12, for special administrative units with regard to national execution.

147. One delegation questioned whether the findings on the mid-term reviews on regional and interregional programmes would be incorporated and whether reviews would be conducted of UNDP programmes in Liberia, Rwanda, Somalia, Zambia and the countries of Central Asia.

148. The Assistant Administrator underlined that the purpose of the mid-term reviews was to take stock of the relevance and direction of country programmes, with identification of problems and corrective action taken. Although the Executive Board had not requested a report on the 1996 mid-term reviews, it could be produced if requested. He emphasized the difficulty of conducting such a large number of reviews and the inability to conduct them in countries in special situations. He underlined the difficulty of analysing impact in reviews, as in some situations UNDP was not a major donor in the country, and often, impact, if discernable, was known only one or two years after the completion of the programme and not at the time of the mid-term review. UNDP was working with the World Bank and UNICEF to develop better indicators, particularly in the social sector.

149. He noted that an intercountry review had been presented to the Executive Board in September 1995, in which it had been concluded, among other things, that UNDP should make greater use of regional institutions and that regional and country programmes should be better linked. He noted that cost-sharing had not been widely utilized outside Latin America. An extensive review on the subject

would be presented to the Executive Board in the near future. In response to a query, he noted that gender mainstreaming was a key priority of UNDP.

150. The Executive Board took note of the overview of the reports on mid-term reviews (DP/1996/12).

Mid-term review of Mozambique (DP/1996/12/Add.1)

151. Many delegations took the floor to express their support for the successful work of UNDP in Mozambique and in particular for the strong coordinating role of the resident coordinator in what had been a particularly difficult period of transition in the country's history. It demonstrated that UNDP could operate effectively in changing circumstances.

152. The report reflected the situation in Mozambique quite well. It demonstrated that UNDP had focused its efforts in aid coordination successfully. Its work had given a positive impact in Mozambique's transition from conflict to reconstruction and development. Several delegations commended the resident coordinator for his chairing of the Aid-for-Democracy Working Group and his close working relationship with the World Bank. Some speakers referred to the positive comments they had received from their missions in Maputo regarding the work of UNDP. One delegation asked for an elaboration of "lessons learned" that could be applied in other countries.

153. Delegations supported the new areas of concentration mentioned in paragraph 13 of the document. Activities in the social sector, in particular in human resources development, were singled out for particular support. One delegation noted the valuable contribution of the United Nations Volunteers in Mozambique.

154. Questions were raised about the ambitious work plan elaborated in the document, progress on providing credit to rural communities, the use of technical support services (TSS-1 and TSS-2), and the pooling of resources in the health sector to provide untied technical cooperation. One delegation, speaking on behalf of another, urged faster implementation, increased national execution and improved capacity-building.

155. The Resident Representative in Mozambique, in response, underlined the important role that coordination had played in the country. However, it was difficult to measure the impact of UNDP activities in Mozambique at that juncture, given the volatility of the situation in recent years. That was a factor to consider in many different countries that were experiencing rapid change - least developed countries, countries with economies in transition, and those emerging from post-conflict situations. It would be necessary to develop a reasonable tool to measure impact in those cases. Moreover, evaluation of the success of national execution and the programme approach in Mozambique was particularly difficult. It could be useful for UNDP to review the given modalities in order to translate them into workable tools. Government ownership in Mozambique had been emphasized.

156. He pointed out that the mid-term review had included information only on the indicative planning figure (IPF) and cost-sharing, but not on co-financing.

He noted that in Mozambique, funding through trust fund arrangements had been more effective. Some $60-70 million had been financed through trust funds in Mozambique.

157. In answer to questions raised, the Resident Representative said a dialogue had begun on the provision of rural credits. With regard to the pooling of resources in the health sector, it was hoped that the modality would be expanded to other sectors in Mozambique and utilized in other countries. With regard to lessons learned in Mozambique, he underlined the need to commence dialogue in the international community early in emergency and post-emergency situations, as often the post-conflict situation demanded more stringent coordination. The TSS-1 and TSS-2 modalities would be reviewed. He agreed that the United Nations Volunteers had been quite instrumental in peace-building in Mozambique, an experience from which other countries could benefit.

158. The Executive Board took note of the mid-term review of Mozambique (DP/1996/12/Add.1).

Mid-term review of the fifth country programme for the Lao People's Democratic Republic (DP/1996/12/Add.2)

159. Appreciation was expressed for the role of UNDP and the Resident Coordinator in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, particularly in aid coordination. The comparative advantages of UNDP were well exemplified in the country programme. One delegation expressed an interest in exploring multi-bi cooperation with UNDP in the future, especially in terms of improving human resource development, in consideration of the Government's plans to join the Association of South-East Asian Nations in 1997. The same delegation requested UNDP to provide a proposal for the use of Capacity 21 funds in the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

160. A number of delegations expressed concern that the mid-term review report had not provided more detailed information on the impact of the UNDP programme. Several speakers echoed the call for strengthened human resource development in the country, in addition to the UNDP focus on poverty eradication, infrastructure development and economic reform. Several questions were posed regarding UNDP plans to cooperate in the hydropower sector, with some delegations noting that its development in the Lao People's Democratic Republic could have a negative impact on the local environment and on water management in neighbouring countries. One delegation advocated that the next round-table meeting for the country be held in the country itself rather than abroad. Another speaker asked for more information on rural development and UNDP work in strengthening local non-governmental organizations.

161. The Chief of the Country Office Support Division of the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific responded to the points raised during the discussion. He noted that impact must be examined in two ways: by looking at the programme as a whole and by examining it at the project level. As the programme involved many donors, it was often difficult to attribute results to a particular donor, such as UNDP. Also difficult to measure was the impact of programmes in areas such as poverty eradication, particularly at the mid-point. At the project level, a full analysis of goals reached and sustainability was available in the

joint issues paper, which was summarized in the report before the Executive Board. Specific reports on the impact of cost-sharing arrangements in the Lao People's Democratic Republic were made available to donors as required. UNDP was working to strengthen the Government's capacity to prepare documentation for the next round-table meeting, to be held in November 1996. He noted that it was possible that the round-table meeting would indeed be held in the country although there was usually higher-level representation by donors when round-table meetings were held at a central point closer to donor capitals. Proposals would be submitted with respect to financing from the Capacity 21 fund. With regard to the concerns raised about UNDP involvement in hydropower, he informed the Executive Board that UNDP actively supported the Mekong Commission and that plans were under way for a workshop to be held in April 1996 in Bangkok on various aspects of the development of the Mekong Basin, including options for the development of hydropower. The workshop would include the participation of non-governmental organizations.

162. The representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic expressed his country's gratitude to the Executive Board for the positive comments of the mid-term review. He noted the valuable cooperation of UNDP in helping his country to carry out economic reform. UNDP had also helped the development process in his country through the coordination of external assistance. A country strategy note had also been elaborated. He noted that rural development was one of the priority areas of his Government. Annual review meetings were planned for each year until 2000 between the Government and all United Nations bodies, led by UNDP, to assess the impact of United Nations programmes.

163. The Executive Board took note of the mid-term review of the fifth country programme for the Lao People's Democratic Republic (DP/1996/12/Add.2).

Mid-term review of the first country programme for the Republic of Yemen (DP/1996/12/Add.3)

164. One delegation congratulated UNDP and its Resident Representative in Yemen for their flexible response to exceptional circumstances in the country. Another delegation asked that UNDP put forward a proposal for funding of activities in Yemen through Capacity 21.

165. The Executive Board took note of the mid-term review of the first country programme for the Republic of Yemen (DP/1996/12/Add.3).

Mid-term review of the mid-term review of the fifth country programme for Brazil (DP/1996/12/Add.4)

166. One delegation noted that the mid-term review of Brazil differed from the others presented to the Executive Board in that it frequently referred to the role of consultants in the preparation of the mid-term review and in activities related to the Government and non-governmental organizations. Also, more information on the impact of the programme was sought. Another delegation queried whether there was a role for UNDP in a World Bank-coordinated project on tropical forests. One delegation noted the positive work of UNDP in institutional support and capacity development.

167. The Programme Manager for Brazil of the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean referred the Executive Board to paragraph 21 of the document, which examined the impact of the programme in Brazil. He noted, as others had, that it was difficult to discern a clear impact at the current stage. Since the format of future reports would be amended, as announced by the Assistant Administrator and Director, BPPS, the work of UNDP could be better reflected in a revised format. He explained that UNDP had engaged a team of consultants to obtain specific inputs to the mid-term review. He also noted that despite what seemed to be a high proliferation of projects, one quarter of the total number accounted for 90 per cent of the programme. UNDP was involved in the coordination of the Tropical Forestry Programme, and in that connection, a close collaboration with the World Bank would be established.

168. The representative of Brazil wished to clarify the work undertaken by the Government through the Brazilian Cooperation Agency with regard to the UNDP country programme. Referring to paragraph 29 of document DP/1996/12/Add.4, he noted that the Brazilian Cooperation Agency, through its Administrative Support Unit, undertook the central administration of all UNDP projects, which at that time numbered about 80, including all large-scale projects. With regard to paragraph 34, his Government attached great importance to the coordinating role of the Brazilian Cooperation Agency. Close links had been established by the Agency's Administrative Support Unit with the different Government sectors, including the Institute for Economic and Social Research and the Ministry of Planning. Referring to paragraph 40, the representative emphasized the importance his Government attached to promoting participation of different Government sectors and civil society in the formulation of UNDP projects, coordinated by the Cooperation Agency. His Government did recognize that for national execution there needed to be a central mechanism in the Federal Government in charge of the execution of the totality of the programme. The five years of experience of the Administrative Support Unit had been very successful in that regard. His Government was very much in agreement with UNDP regarding decentralization, a subject on which more discussion was welcomed.

169. The Executive Board took note of the mid-term review of the fifth country programme for Brazil (DP/1996/12/Add.4).

Mid-term review of the fifth country programme for Romania (DP/1996/12/Add.5)

170. The representative of Romania praised UNDP for the seriousness, openness and transparency of the mid-term review exercise. The work of UNDP in Romania was positive and had established a good image with civil society. The document revealed several key developments, including the commitment by the Government to continue and expand cooperation with UNDP in keeping with national priorities through the incorporation of the new vision and goals of UNDP. Ongoing projects focused on important areas such as human resource development, environment, energy and social safety nets. It was necessary to channel more resources to those areas. He noted the very relevant impact of the UNDP country programme in Romania. With regard to financing, the indicative planning figure was important in stimulating the process of co-financing. In that regard, he wished to thank several Governments for their co-financing of the programme in Romania. In expressing his Government's appreciation to the Administrator, the Associate Administrator, the Resident Coordinator in Romania, and the Regional Director,

he stated that his Government was ready to support the new vision of UNDP. The Resident Coordinator was thanked for the effectiveness in using the limited available resources. His delegation also looked forward to discussions on the implementation of the successor programming arrangements.

171. One delegation noted the excellent cooperation with the donor community in Romania and the overall success of the UNDP programme there. He called for increased national execution in Romania, given the high level of training and expertise among people of the country. He also noted the need for countries with economies in transition to cooperate among themselves, in areas such as privatization. Another delegation expressed support for UNDP work in human resources development in Romania and noted that the country would continue to operate under financial austerity.

172. The Executive Board approved the mid-term review of the fifth country programme for Romania (DP/1996/12/Add.5).

Assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina

173. The Associate Administrator gave an oral progress report, as required by Executive Board decision 96/11, on UNDP assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

174. UNDP had established cooperation with Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1993: $600,000 had been allocated for the fifth programming cycle and the programme had been managed from headquarters. During an exploratory mission to the country in December 1995, UNDP had signed the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement with Bosnia and Herzegovina. In its decision 96/11, the Associate Administrator recalled, the Executive Board had allocated $5 million in funding for Bosnia and Herzegovina and had approved the opening of a UNDP office in Sarajevo.

175. Since January 1996, the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States had held discussions with administrative and support units of UNDP to establish an office in Sarajevo. UNDP had agreed to establish the posts of Resident Representative, Deputy Resident Representative and Operations Manager for Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Operations Manager was already present in Sarajevo, finalizing the arrangements to secure the necessary office space. UNDP had also allocated resources from the core budget for the recruitment of local staff for the office and to cover the initial costs of establishing the office, as well as its operating costs for 1996. All efforts were being made to share common services and premise costs with other United Nations agencies, and to procure, when possible, equipment from the United Nations at favourable prices. It was expected that the office would be operational by May 1996.

176. In March 1996, an inter-agency mission visited Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to establish a programming framework. The mission articulated development proposals that complemented the humanitarian and relief operations included in the consolidated appeal launched on 1 March 1996 and that were designed to assist in the process of rebuilding civil society in the medium term. Programmes would be undertaken at both the central and local levels and would assist national capacity-building for essential government institutions and the establishment of area-based development schemes. An *aide-mémoire* was being

concluded with the Governments (central Government, Bosniac/Croat Federation and Serbian Republic) outlining those agreements. UNDP would submit a multisectoral, medium-term development programme to donors later in the year.

177. The Bureau would ensure that all its programmes were coordinated with those of other multilateral and bilateral aid partners. UNDP stood ready to assume the lead role within the United Nations development system, under the overall guidance of the United Nations Special Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, appointed by the Secretary-General in February 1996. Through his office, UNDP would seek a coordinated dialogue with the Office of the High Representative.

178. The Associate Administrator thanked the Government of Japan for its generous contribution of $30.9 million for the UNDP programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He also thanked the Governments of Austria and Italy for their positive contributions.

179. The representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina thanked UNDP and the Executive Board for their assistance to his country. He encouraged UNDP to establish its presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina as early as possible. Its cooperative efforts were much valued as a contribution to the reconstruction of the country and its priorities of strengthening civil society, resettling refugees and helping to return displaced persons to their homes. He expressed his country's gratitude to the Governments of Japan, Austria and Italy for their contributions.

180. Several delegations expressed their appreciation for UNDP assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina. They stressed the urgency of developing a full-fledged programme and establishing a fully staffed office. It was important for UNDP to focus on particular areas where it had a comparative advantage, in particular in the social and developmental aspects, and in coordination with donors. More clarity on the UNDP role was sought.

181. The Associate Administrator responded that the urgency to set up the office was shared by UNDP. Both the Resident Representative and Deputy Resident Representative had been selected. He offered to share with interested delegations the report of the programming mission, which gave more details on prospective areas of focus of UNDP involvement. Given the many international actors in the country, UNDP understood the critical need for coordination.

182. The Executive Board took note of the oral progress report on Bosnia and Herzegovina.

XI. FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

183. The Administrator introduced the item, including conference room papers prepared for the session, and the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) (DP/1996/25).

184. He emphasized the importance of the work of the Office of United Nations System Support and Services (OUNS) in providing support for the entire United

Nations system in overseeing the strengthening of the resident coordinator function. It was difficult to draw a sharp separation between the responsibilities of UNDP itself and of UNDP acting on behalf of the United Nations system with regard to the resident coordinator system. He underlined that UNDP had responsibility for the overall management and funding of the resident coordinator.

185. With reference to the ACABQ report, he wished to provide clarification of some of the issues raised. An organizational chart of OUNS was distributed for the information of delegations. The Division for Resident Coordinator System Support developed the guidelines for managing the allocations of resources to support countries in special situations and to support the resident coordinator on the successor programming arrangements. The function of resident coordinator support, formerly administered by the United Nations Department for Programme Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD), had been transferred to UNDP and was financed by UNDP. The triennial policy review undertaken in 1995 had shown that one half of the time of resident coordinators was spent on resident coordinator functions. That leadership role, which included the role of humanitarian coordinator in most countries confronting or emerging from crisis must continue to be strengthened. Another key function of the resident coordinator was to assist Governments in the coordination of external assistance. The latter category was included in line 1.1.3 of the successor programming arrangements. The necessary backstopping for fulfilment of this function was provided by OUNS.

186. Secondly, the Division for Policy Advisory Services of OUNS provided support for the responsibilities he had undertaken at the request of the Secretary-General in his role as Special Coordinator for Economic and Social Development. Recent activities undertaken by the Division had included support of the launching of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa and an action plan for supporting country-level operations on the integrated follow-up to international conferences.

187. The Division also provided the support for and follow-up to formal and informal meetings of the senior officials in the economic and social sectors, which he chaired in his capacity as Special Coordinator, on behalf of the Secretary-General. The Division worked to develop the United Nations system as a strong and integrated force for sustainable human development.

188. The Directorate of OUNS was headed by a Director, at the D-2 level, who also served as Deputy United Nations Security Coordinator. He noted that it was not unusual for a D-2 to report to another D-2, as was the case in OUNS. Moreover, the requisite number of D-2 posts had not been exceeded. As regards the ratio of Professional level to General Service level posts, questioned in the ACABQ report, he explained that some of the General Service staff performed para-professional work. He underlined that OUNS was well organized and provided vital service to the United Nations. It implemented mandates of the Executive Board and was consistent with the budget strategy. In addition, other parts of the United Nations system were participating in OUNS through secondments, which were welcomed by UNDP.

189. The Administrator underlined the good relationship with DPCSD and the bridge provided through his role as Special Coordinator to all the United Nations departments, funds and programmes. He expected this to create a stronger link between development and relief, as well as strengthened ties with the Bretton Woods institutions.

190. One delegation, also speaking on behalf of another, recalled the provisions of paragraph 35 of Executive Board decision 95/28, and wished to draw attention to paragraph 7 of the ACABQ report, which referred to paragraph 38 of General Assembly resolution 50/120, in which funds and programmes were invited to support the resident coordinator function. More information was needed on the follow-up to that provision. In principle, the speaker, later supported by others, agreed with the comment by ACABQ, which recommended that system-wide coordination at the headquarters level be financed by the United Nations regular budget to ensure no diversion of funding from operational activities. One delegation stated that it considered that all activities outlined in one of the conference room papers could be financed by UNDP.

191. Several delegations expressed their appreciation for the clarifications provided by the Administrator on the questions raised in the ACABQ report. They acknowledged that some of the points raised by ACABQ, such as the funding of United Nations coordination support functions, could not be directly addressed by the Executive Board and should be addressed by the Fifth Committee.

192. One delegation, speaking also on behalf of another, raised questions about the chain of command in OUNS and the need to enhance the support from other funds and programmes. He thanked the Administrator for the clarifications provided in his oral and written reports. He stressed that the Office must be owned by the United Nations system and linked to coordination efforts. The stated ratio of resident coordinator time used for resident coordinator functions vis-à-vis UNDP functions was of concern.

193. Another delegation suggested that the proposal regarding OUNS be approved on a provisional basis. Several delegations expressed support for the new functions of the Administrator as Special Coordinator and of OUNS in supporting his role.

194. A number of delegations, in recognizing the key role played by OUNS, expressed support for system-wide staffing inputs to the Office and further clarification of the respective roles of UNDP and DPCSD in terms of coordination of headquarters departments. The role of UNDP in country-level coordination was affirmed. Further clarification of the roles was requested.

195. One delegation emphasized the need to clarify the mandate of the resident coordinator in cases where the humanitarian coordinator was from a different organization. Strengthened directives for the work of the resident coordinator and more support from specialized agencies at the country level would be welcomed.

196. There was broad support expressed for the final allocation of the five posts referred to in paragraphs 13 and 14 of Executive Board decision 95/28, as proposed by the Administrator.

Nations system in overseeing the strengthening of the resident coordinator function. It was difficult to draw a sharp separation between the responsibilities of UNDP itself and of UNDP acting on behalf of the United Nations system with regard to the resident coordinator system. He underlined that UNDP had responsibility for the overall management and funding of the resident coordinator.

185. With reference to the ACABQ report, he wished to provide clarification of some of the issues raised. An organizational chart of OUNS was distributed for the information of delegations. The Division for Resident Coordinator System Support developed the guidelines for managing the allocations of resources to support countries in special situations and to support the resident coordinator on the successor programming arrangements. The function of resident coordinator support, formerly administered by the United Nations Department for Programme Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD), had been transferred to UNDP and was financed by UNDP. The triennial policy review undertaken in 1995 had shown that one half of the time of resident coordinators was spent on resident coordinator functions. That leadership role, which included the role of humanitarian coordinator in most countries confronting or emerging from crisis must continue to be strengthened. Another key function of the resident coordinator was to assist Governments in the coordination of external assistance. The latter category was included in line 1.1.3 of the successor programming arrangements. The necessary backstopping for fulfilment of this function was provided by OUNS.

186. Secondly, the Division for Policy Advisory Services of OUNS provided support for the responsibilities he had undertaken at the request of the Secretary-General in his role as Special Coordinator for Economic and Social Development. Recent activities undertaken by the Division had included support of the launching of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa and an action plan for supporting country-level operations on the integrated follow-up to international conferences.

187. The Division also provided the support for and follow-up to formal and informal meetings of the senior officials in the economic and social sectors, which he chaired in his capacity as Special Coordinator, on behalf of the Secretary-General. The Division worked to develop the United Nations system as a strong and integrated force for sustainable human development.

188. The Directorate of OUNS was headed by a Director, at the D-2 level, who also served as Deputy United Nations Security Coordinator. He noted that it was not unusual for a D-2 to report to another D-2, as was the case in OUNS. Moreover, the requisite number of D-2 posts had not been exceeded. As regards the ratio of Professional level to General Service level posts, questioned in the ACABQ report, he explained that some of the General Service staff performed para-professional work. He underlined that OUNS was well organized and provided vital service to the United Nations. It implemented mandates of the Executive Board and was consistent with the budget strategy. In addition, other parts of the United Nations system were participating in OUNS through secondments, which were welcomed by UNDP.

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196. There was broad support expressed for the final allocation of the five posts referred to in paragraphs 13 and 14 of Executive Board decision 95/28, as proposed by the Administrator.

197. In response to the comments raised in the discussion, the Administrator emphasized the importance of having an organization dedicated to the success of the entire United Nations system. In terms of financing, he stated that the tasks relating to system-wide coordination carried out by OUNS such as integrated follow-up to conferences and the Special Initiative for Africa, were of specific relevance to operational activities and should not be funded out of the regular budget of the United Nations.

198. He appreciated the comments made by delegations regarding secondments and support for the resident coordinator system. In response to concerns raised about the time spent on resident coordinator matters, he stated that he interpreted the work undertaken in that regard to be an integral part of the development function. He did not see a conflict in the roles of UNDP and DPCSD. He noted that the issues raised could relate to the responsibilities included in his role as Special Coordinator and how they pertained to DPCSD, as the Department was one of the participants in the consultations among Senior Officials for which he was responsible.

199. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/21. UNDP: Financial, budgetary and administrative matters

The Executive Board

1. Recalls its decision 95/28 on the revised budget estimates for the biennium 1996-1997 of the United Nations Development Programme, including paragraphs 13-14 and 34-37;

2. Takes note of the information provided at the current session by the Administrator, and of the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (DP/1996/25) as well as of the statement of the Administrator;

3. Takes note of the final allocation of five posts (paragraphs 13 and 14 of Executive Board decision 95/28) as proposed by the Administrator;

4. Requests the Administrator to report to the Executive Board at its third regular session 1996 on efforts to follow up on General Assembly resolution 50/120 on the triennial policy review, in particular paragraph 38 thereof, in which the General Assembly invited the United Nations system, including the funds and programmes, specialized agencies and the secretariat, to provide, as appropriate, support to the resident coordinator system, in view of the fact that the Office of United Nations System Support and Services is serving as the focal point in support of the resident coordinator system;

5. Requests the Administrator to review, as appropriate, the proposed organizational structure of the Office of United Nations System Support and Services, taking into account the comments made by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and to report thereon at its third regular session 1996, in the context of the report on the revised budget estimates;

6. *Decides* in view of the issues raised in paragraphs 4-5 above, to approve on a provisional basis the proposal relating to the Office of United Nations System Support and Services as contained in paragraphs 164-166 of document DP/1995/51;

7. *Requests* the Administrator, in the context of paragraph 6 above, to bear in mind the necessity of further clarification on the financing of the responsibility given by the Secretary-General to the Administrator for improving the coordination of operational activities for development as well as the ongoing reform process of operational activities;

8. *Requests* the Administrator to bring the present decision to the attention of the funds and programmes, specialized agencies, and United Nations Secretariat.

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XII. EVALUATION

200. The Administrator reported on developments that had taken place in UNDP since the first regular session 1996. He noted that regional meetings of resident representatives/resident coordinators had been held for Africa, the Arab States and Latin America and the Caribbean. He had visited 12 programme countries, including five of the Gulf States, and six donor countries, the latter with the purpose of mobilizing core resources. Also taking place during the past few months had been efforts to move major programming guidelines forward. A meeting of senior management to discuss the UNDP reform process had been held from 21 to 24 February 1996. Also of special note was the formulation of an integrated United Nations action plan for follow up on the outcome of United Nations conferences and the launching of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa. The reassignment exercise had also been concluded.

201. The Administrator requested the Executive Board to examine the possibility of rationalizing the frequency and composition of its meetings with UNDP in order to maximize dialogue on substantive issues.

202. The Director of the Office for Evaluation and Strategic Planning (OESP), in presenting the report of the Administrator on evaluation (DP/1996/14), welcomed the opportunity to continue the dialogue with the Executive Board regarding the role of evaluation in helping UNDP become a more effective and accountable learning organization.

203. She highlighted the achievements of OESP and the challenges ahead, noting in particular strategic evaluations conducted, dissemination of lessons learned and the expected availability to country offices of the evaluation central database by the end of 1996. New evaluation guidelines would be also be issued in 1996. Compliance and the scope of the 1996 work programme presented challenges. On the issue of compliance, OESP was proposing to institute two new measures: presentation of an annual compliance report to the Executive Board

and identification in the 1996-1997 corporate plan of the full programme of mandatory evaluations.

204. The tentative work programme for OESP for 1996 would continue to address the most vital issues, covering strategic evaluations as well as regular evaluations, including those of country programmes. It also addressed important methodological work, including the finalization of new guidelines needed to make the transition to the programme approach and to the successor programming arrangements. There would be an integrated process to deal with monitoring, evaluation and planning. Another key innovation would be the finalization of the programme impact and performance assessment system. The 1996 workplan also foresaw support activities for the development of national monitoring and evaluation capacity, the continuation of collaboration on harmonization and other substantive issues arising from the triennial comprehensive policy review with various intergovernmental and inter-agency bodies dealing with evaluation.

205. The Director of OESP concluded that UNDP would become a more accountable learning organization by supporting dynamic linkages between evaluation and key strategic initiatives that repositioned the organization as a more knowledge-based organization.

206. Fulfilling that vision would require strong commitment by management, especially with respect to monitoring, evaluation compliance and the use of feedback.

207. Several delegations expressed their appreciation to the Administrator for his presence and for the information he provided on the activities of UNDP since the first regular session 1996 and especially the developments concerning the reform process in the organization.

208. Many speakers also thanked the Director of OESP for her presentation and the information presented to the Executive Board, which included the evaluation compliance report and the tentative workplan for evaluation activities in 1996.

209. The ensuing discussions stressed the importance given by members of the Board to the monitoring and evaluation function. Some members emphasized the advantages of the link between evaluation and strategic planning and underscored the linkages between evaluation, quality service and control as well as performance. They also recognized the work undertaken by UNDP with programme countries to increase the capacity for evaluation. Several delegations commended the efforts made by UNDP to improve the quality of evaluations and to make the function a priority throughout the organization.

210. The issues and questions were answered directly by the Director of OESP. The major issues were: confidence between UNDP and the Executive Board; compliance; procedures and criteria used in evaluation; reporting; dissemination of lessons learned and feedback mechanisms; integration of evaluation in the new successor programming arrangements; and the commitment of the senior management to evaluation and monitoring.

211. Confidence. One delegation raised the issue of confidence of programme and donor countries towards the work being done in evaluation. Five points were

raised: (a) examination of focus areas in evaluations; (b) sufficiency of evaluations; (c) degrees of lessons learned; (d) building an evaluation culture in UNDP; and (e) generation of information on findings.

212. Another delegation cautioned that the nature of technical cooperation made it difficult to evaluate the work of UNDP since the notion of impact was conditional to extraneous factors. In that context, the question of confidence had to be examined in relation to clear expectations from donor and programme countries.

213. In her response, the Director of OESP recalled the various initiatives taken by UNDP to bring to the Executive Board concerns about evaluation, to increase transparency and to work in collaboration with other organizations. She recognized that more work was needed to put in place systems generating adequate information about the learning process.

214. Information presented to the Executive Board included: the statistical analysis prepared by the former Central Evaluation Office and presented to the Board on a biennial basis; the 1993 feedback study, which highlighted the lack of sufficient attention paid to evaluation; the presentation by OESP to the Board in 1995 of the paper entitled "Rethinking Evaluation"; the OESP publication series on lessons learned, and the issuance of the compliance report. In addition, she noted that OESP worked closely in matters of evaluation and monitoring with other organizations and countries such as the Swedish International Development Agency, the Canadian International Development Agency, the Netherlands, Norway and Japan. At the United Nations system level, UNDP was chairing the Inter-Agency Working Group on evaluation and the Joint Consultative Group on Policy working group on harmonization. Within the tripartite arrangement, all evaluations conducted by UNDP at the programme and project level involved other organizations. In fulfilling its mandate of building capacity for monitoring and evaluation, OESP was working with 30 developing countries and had published monographs on the monitoring and evaluation systems of 17 countries.

215. The Director of OESP added that evaluations in OESP met all the required standards with respect to independence. To the question whether UNDP was learning enough through evaluations, the Director gave the example of the evaluation of the energy sector, whose recommendations provided a platform for the promulgation of a new policy by the Sustainable Energy and Environment Division (SEED). The selection of topics to be evaluated was made by OESP in consultation with management. Some of the evaluations were mandated by the Executive Board and the Director welcomed suggestions for the inclusion of evaluations in the 1996 work programme.

216. Compliance. With regard to compliance, many speakers welcomed the issuance of the OESP report on the subject as a step towards increased transparency in reporting. Some delegations were concerned about the reasons why full compliance had not been achieved and requested some explanations on the differences in compliance rates for the various regions. The case of the Latin American region was singled out because of the sharp decline in the compliance rate between 1988 and 1989. The delegations also sought clarification on the methodology used for the compilation of statistical information in the

compliance report. One delegation pointed out a discrepancy between the overall compliance rate given in the report (52 per cent) and the figure given in the report to the Board of Auditors (80 per cent). Some suggested the extension of mandatory evaluations to projects with budgets below $1 million.

217. The Director of OESP acknowledged that current compliance rates were not at an acceptable level. The system to monitor compliance was in place, however, and enforcement had remained an issue. The issuance of the compliance report had brought the problem to the attention of Senior Management, who was now requesting the regional bureaux to provide explanations for their rates of compliance. The issue would be dealt with through the corporate plan and managers would be held accountable through the performance appraisal review system.

218. The Director noted that the sharp decline in the compliance rate in the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean between 1988 and 1989 coincided with very low indicative planning figures in the region, following the overall reduction at the beginning of the fifth programming cycle, the decline being explained by a shift in priorities towards resource mobilization. The discrepancy between the figures contained in the report of the Board of Auditors and the compliance report were explained by the fact that compliance was considered in the strictest sense for the compliance report. The Director announced that OESP would be available to discuss the compliance report in depth with the members of the Executive Board after the session.

219. Procedures and criteria used in evaluation. Two queries were raised on the existence of criteria at the project/programme design level to accommodate evaluations and on the type of criteria used to select specific evaluations. Two delegations also raised the issue of criteria for impact measurement.

220. The Director of OESP responded that in all programme and project evaluations, the inclusion of sustainable human development indicators and capacity development indicators were mandatory. For strategic evaluations, timeliness was a determining factor in selection. Impact measurement was being addressed through the programme impact and performance assessment system. The Office was also undertaking a joint study with the Swedish International Development Agency on the subject.

221. Reporting. Delegations expressed their expectation that a new reporting format would allow for the elaboration of clear policy guidance by the Executive Board. Some delegations felt that reporting on evaluation should be consolidated to include a yearly annual report, evaluation findings, compliance report and the workplan for evaluation; others suggested that reporting should address implementation issues. Two delegations requested that specific case studies as well as action taken be included in the report. On the programme of work for 1996, two delegations suggested the inclusion of a specific evaluation on the impact of the unpredictability of UNDP resources on the development programme of recipient countries. There was a consensus that dialogue between the Executive Board and UNDP should be strengthened on the issue of reporting. Two delegations proposed that OESP report directly to the Executive Board on major evaluations.

222. Elaborating on the number of possible levels of reporting, the Director of OESP reiterated that OESP needed clear guidance from the Executive Board in order to prepare an annual report that would meet expectations. The timing of the report for submission at the annual session rather than at the second session would allow OESP to compile more complete information. The Director also agreed that results of strategic evaluation would be presented to the Board.

223. Dissemination of lessons learned and feedback mechanisms. Three delegations stressed the importance of the feedback mechanism to incorporate lessons learned in programming. They requested an explanation of the relationship between OESP, the regional bureaux, country offices, executing agencies and Governments and how they worked together in providing feedback and lessons learned. While recognizing the complexity of monitoring the inclusion of evaluation recommendations into programming and execution, the Executive Board members encouraged UNDP to pursue their effort in that area and to continue to improve feedback mechanisms. Some delegations had questions on the availability to recipient countries of evaluation results.

224. The Director of OESP committed to providing detailed information of the decentralized system of evaluation within UNDP. On the availability of evaluation results, she confirmed that the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee database was accessible to all countries and that the UNDP evaluation database would be accessible to programme countries by December 1996. In addition, evaluation lessons would be available on Internet.

225. Integration of lessons learned into successor programming arrangements. Several delegations stressed the importance of evaluation in the context of the successor programming arrangements.

226. Commitment of Senior Management to evaluation and monitoring. Three delegations emphasized the critical role of UNDP Senior Management in ensuring that evaluation and monitoring be given proper recognition at all levels in the organization.

227. One delegation suggested that evaluation and monitoring should become key objectives in the next organizational plan. Questions on the commitment of senior management to evaluation and monitoring were directed to the Administrator.

228. The Administrator reaffirmed his total confidence in OESP to deal with issues at hand and asserted that he was committed to addressing the shortcomings highlighted by the Executive Board. The highest level of compliance would be sought and staff would be directly accountable. High standards of evaluation would be applied with core resources as well as co-financing. Feedback mechanisms would be reinforced to ensure that results of evaluation had a direct bearing on programming and policy. The Administrator also requested the Executive Board to reconfirm the organizational location and structure of OESP by keeping together the evaluation and the strategic planning functions.

229. On the issue of donor confidence, the Administrator underlined the fact that all institutions were now being challenged to demonstrate effectiveness and results and that evaluation was one way of ensuring that results were achieved.

230. Closing remarks were made by the Director of OESP, who thanked the Executive Board for the importance attached to evaluation and welcomed the opportunity of a continuous dialogue to improve the quality of evaluations in UNDP.

231. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/20. UNDP evaluation

The Executive Board

1. Recognizes the importance of evaluation and monitoring as mechanisms providing information on the operational progress and impact of United Nations Development Programme activities for all participants in the activities of the Programme, for all Programme staff and for the Executive Board;

2. Stresses the fundamental importance of feeding back the lessons of monitoring and evaluation into planning and management in order to improve continually the quality of the organization's output, and the need for this concept to be shared by all its staff;

3. Requests the Administrator, in this context, and through the mechanism of the organizational plan, to ensure that evaluation and monitoring are firmly established in the management culture of the United Nations Development Programme by, inter alia:

(a) Raising the profile of accountability and of staff and programme performance monitoring and evaluation in the Programme so that all its divisions recognize its vital importance;

(b) Reviewing and revising as necessary, and in the light of "initiatives for change" and the successor programming arrangements, the systems and criteria for selecting subjects for evaluation; the handling in evaluations of the Programme's operational implementation of its areas of focus; opportunities for joint evaluations with other United Nations bodies; and the actions required of Programme personnel, including clear objective-setting at all levels;

(c) Linking compliance with monitoring and evaluation procedures with the Programme's personnel management and reporting systems;

(d) Reporting the results of strategic evaluations to the Executive Board;

4. Calls upon the Administrator to ensure that evaluation work has the necessary degree of independence to carry out objective evaluations; and to report to the Executive Board at its annual session 1997 on progress made on the implementation of the present decision.

29 March 1996

XIII. ASSISTANCE TO THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

232. The Associate Administrator introduced the report of the Administrator on the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (PAPP) (DP/1996/15), noting that the past year had been one of great expansion, change and adaptation to the evolving situation in the region.

233. Four elements of the report were highlighted by the Associate Administrator. First, the ability of UNDP to provide quick delivery in priority areas for the Palestinian Authority, the donor community and UNDP. It had resulted in an expansion of the programme's technical, engineering and programming staff, both in Gaza and the West Bank. One concrete example of the mechanism was the employment and income-generation programme. A second factor was the generosity of the international donor community, with virtually all of the $34 million in expenditures in 1995 coming from bilateral agencies, the United Nations Capital Development Fund and UNFPA. It was estimated that $46 million in expenditures would come from the same sources in 1996. The Associate Administrator thanked the Government of Japan, in particular, for its significant financial support and collaboration with regard to the programme. Support from donors had enabled the programme to become largely self-financing.

234. A third element was the completion in mid-1995 of a programme framework covering 1996-1998. The document, which emphasized institution-building, the empowerment and advancement of women, environment, and sustainable livelihoods through employment-generating public works programmes, had the full endorsement of the Palestinian Authority. A programme of at least $94 million was envisaged for the three-year period.

235. A final point concerned the participation of the programme in coordination, including the Consultative Group meetings for the West Bank and Gaza, and the Working Group meetings in the multilateral process. UNDP had also supported the Local Area Coordinating Committees, established by the United Nations Special Coordinator.

236. The representative of Palestine expressed his appreciation to UNDP for the work of PAPP and to the Associate Administrator for inaugurating the office in Gaza. While an international success story was being hailed, his authorities wished to underline the destruction in the economic and social sector in the Occupied Territories as a result of Israeli actions. In particular, he called on Israel to reverse the decision to close its borders, which was preventing the movement of persons and goods. With regard to the work of UNDP in Gaza and the West Bank, UNDP core resources to PAPP should be increased, given the self-financing nature of the Programme. He acknowledged with thanks the financial

contributions of a number of Governments for their support to PAPP and urged the international community to increase its contributions.

237. Another delegation welcomed a recent agreement between UNDP and his Government to provide technical cooperation to developing countries. He noted that the Executive Board must discuss how best to implement the policies contained in the report. He cited the intervention by the previous speaker, which had included political issues that were not relevant to the discussion by the Board. The closure of his country's borders was not intended to hurt the economy in Gaza and the West Bank, but rather to provide security and preventing terrorists from entering his country. He stated that the delivery of food, building materials and textiles had been allowed. His Government hoped that the international community would eradicate terrorism. He encouraged UNDP to provide assistance to the Palestinian people and to promote increased cooperation.

238. Many delegations expressed support for the report and the role of PAPP, in particular in job creation and income generation. Close cooperation with other international organizations in providing assistance was encouraged. The Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) programme was cited as a good example of the broad contribution of UNDP. The self-financing nature of PAPP was widely supported by speakers, with some suggesting that it could serve as an example for other programmes. Delegations were pleased to see the emphasis on productive assets and outputs in the report. Good coordination and positive inputs had contributed to the peace process.

239. Several speakers requested an increase in the core resources earmarked for PAPP under the successor programming arrangements.

240. The Associate Administrator noted that self-financing was only possible if UNDP was able to spend what it received. At the present time, expenditures had slowed and there was some difficulty in ensuring that the programming in the pipeline was carried out. With regard to an increase in core resources, he explained that the core budget contribution was $4 million per annum for 1997 and 1998, earmarked from line 1.1.3. That represented almost a doubling of the fifth programming cycle resources of $2.1 million per annum. If the funding of PAPP had been earmarked from lines 1.1.1 and 1.1.2, the notional figure for 1997 and 1998 would have been $600,000 per annum.

241. The Director of the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People underlined the high priority of UNDP on employment and job creation, and noted the recent contributions of the Governments of Japan, Norway and Sweden of $11.5 million for activities in job creation.

242. The Special Representative of PAPP in Jerusalem stated that UNDP would use the programme as a model for future decentralized activities. He underlined the need to utilize cost-effective modalities such as the TOKTEN programme. One of the goals of PAPP was to build bridges to all countries in the region, particularly in the agricultural sector. He noted that it was not always possible to keep to sustainable human development criteria in implementing the programme because of its activities in providing wages for work by unemployed

persons. With the support of donors, he hoped that changes could be implemented to avoid red tape in implementing the Programme's development work.

243. One delegation thanked the Associate Administrator for his explanation of how core resources were allocated to PAPP. He explained that the draft decision would maintain the request to increase core resources if it was possible. Another delegation supported the flexible formula on financing, and underlined the need for UNDP not to divert resources earmarked for PAPP to other regional projects.

244. One delegation asked for clarification about the source of any proposed increase in funding for PAPP from core resources and suggested that the text of the draft decision include a reference to the resources coming from line 1.1.3. Another delegation noted that confirmation had already been given by the secretariat that line 1.1.3 would be the source of additional resources for PAPP.

245. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/19. Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the Administrator (DP/1996/15);

2. Requests the Administrator to envisage increasing the core resources of the United Nations Development Programme allocated to the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People under the future arrangements for the period 1997-1998;

3. Encourages the international donor community to continue its high level of contributions to the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People and to take full advantage of the Programme's well-tested implementation and delivery capacities.

29 March 1996

246. During the approval of the overview decision, one delegation asked for clarification as to why a proposal for inclusion of language regarding the source of additional funding to be earmarked as coming from line 1.1.3 had not been included in the text of decision 96/19, as it had been her understanding that the inclusion had been agreed upon. Another delegation, who had been chairing the meeting during the session in which the decision had been adopted, explained that it was his understanding that the explanation offered by the secretariat had provided assurance that the only source of increased core funding for PAPP could be line 1.1.3. One delegation noted that the guidelines for line 1.1.3 were not yet available. As the decision had already been approved, the Executive Board agreed to note that the source of any increased funding from core resources for PAPP would be line 1.1.3 of the successor programming arrangements.

XIV. OTHER MATTERS

Draft report of the Secretary-General on internal oversight mechanisms

247. The Officer-in-charge of the Office of Internal Oversight Services introduced the draft report of the Secretary-General on enhancing the internal oversight mechanisms in operational funds and programmes (DP/1996/16). He noted that the statement made by the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services to an informal session of the Executive Board on 11 March 1996 was available.

248. The mardate for the report had been given to the Secretary-General by the General Assembly in its resolution 48/218 B, through which had also established the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). The purpose was to elaborate on how OIOS could assist operational funds and programmes in enhancing their internal oversight mechanisms. The Office had taken stock of the current oversight mechanisms, and based on its findings, made eight recommendations, which were included in the report. If found acceptable, the recommendations would extend the concept of internal oversight as defined in General Assembly resolution 48/218 B to the operational funds and programmes.

249. Continuing, the Officer-in-charge of OIOS outlined a number of elements in the concept of internal oversight, as defined by the General Assembly. Feedback from Member States had been generally positive. The concept of OIOS was not alien to operational funds and programmes as OIOS already provided its services entirely or in part to eight of them, and the remaining five, including UNDP and UNFPA, handled their own oversight functions.

250. Moreover, there was a solid basis for successful cooperation and coordination among all oversight units of operational funds and programmes, owing to a number of recent developments. Internal auditing standards for all United Nations organizations had been approved; many operational funds and programmes would be serviced by the Integrated Management Information System, which would require unified procedures in audits of salaries and allowances, procurement, accounts and financial statements, and budget allotments; and already existing cooperation in some oversight mechanisms.

251. OIOS maintained that there was a need to formalize cooperation among oversight services of operational funds and programmes on a legislated, regular and solid basis, which would be supported by each organization's management. While internal oversight mechanisms of funds and programmes differed from one another, organizational arrangements such as audit and evaluation functions were equally viable. He noted that there was more diversity in monitoring and inspection, and almost no experience among agencies in investigations.

252. The underlying concept in the draft report was to preserve the established oversight functions that existed in the organizations, while introducing additional mechanisms and procedures that have proven useful to OIOS and that were necessary for a modern and effective internal oversight service. On reporting lines, the draft report recommended that in addition to an annual report from the oversight unit to the governing body of its organization, a report could also be issued directly to the General Assembly.

253. One delegation underlined the need for strong and effective oversight mechanisms in United Nations funds and programmes, particularly during a time of tightening budgets. With the adoption of General Assembly resolution 48/218 B, sound oversight elements such as auditing, monitoring, evaluation, inspection and investigation, must become integral features of accountability for all funds and programmes. That delegation expressed strong endorsement of the eight recommendations contained in the draft report. The draft report was an excellent framework for strengthening internal oversight and the modalities of the relationship between OIOS and the funds and programmes. In particular, the delegation recommended: more emphasis on monitoring, which was perceived as especially weak; concise and informative reports on oversight to the Executive Board and specific information on oversight as part of the annual report of OIOS to the General Assembly, with comments by OIOS on the input from funds and programmes; reliance of funds and programmes on OIOS for assistance in investigations; and the prompt, direct and unimpeded access for OIOS to all records, documents and other materials of funds and programmes.

254. A number of delegations expressed appreciation for the report and noted their expectation that the recommendations would lead to improved harmonization in the oversight procedures of funds and programmes and would enhance communication between the United Nations and the governing bodies of funds and programmes. One delegation emphasized the importance of effective oversight mechanisms for the overall functioning of United Nations funds and programmes and for the elimination of waste and inefficiency. In that context, the delegation noted the timeliness and pertinence of the draft report and also expressed satisfaction that the United Nations funds and programmes, including UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, had correctly provided emphasis on management and performance audits over financial audits in their long-established internal audit functions. One delegation welcomed the opportunity to comment on the report in its draft form and stated that although viable current oversight arrangements need not be changed, a coherent system should be established.

255. Several delegations stressed that the Executive Board must not be circumvented in the reporting line and hence must review any reports that dealt with internal oversight mechanisms in funds and programmes. It was suggested that the report of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS to the Board on internal oversight also include the text of the report which was to be submitted as part of the report of the Secretary-General on oversight mechanisms in United Nations funds and programmes in order for the Board to provide comments to that input. It was also recommended that the report to the General Assembly on oversight in funds and programmes be submitted through the Economic and Social Council.

256. One delegation questioned the reference in paragraph 37 of the draft report of the Secretary-General to the suggestion that funds and programmes should have a reporting line through OIOS to the General Assembly on internal oversight. That, the representative noted, would circumvent the accountability of the Executive Board. It should be sufficient that the Board report to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council. He further stated that preparation by OIOS of a report on oversight issues, as contained in recommendation 7 of the draft report, would be duplicative since an annual report on oversight by the fund or programme would suffice. In addition, recommendation 8, under which OIOS would have the authority to seek and obtain

information from the internal oversight entities at the executive head level and to comment on the quality and adequacy of oversight activities of funds and programmes as they would be reported to the General Assembly following recommendation number 7, seemed to be well beyond what was required to achieve enhancement and coordination in the area. He emphasized that any second tier of reporting on internal oversight in UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS would circumvent their accountability to the Executive Board.

257. Questions were raised about the procedure involved in commenting on the draft report. Several delegations suggested that more discussion was needed by the Executive Board before coming to a decision. The recommendations could have been made after Board review rather than before. Some supported taking note of the report while seeking further clarification of any inadequacies in oversight functions in funds and programmes. In order to support fully the recommendations, the Board would need full information on the effectiveness of service provided by the internal oversight units, leading to more integrated and consolidated action. For example, the draft report needed to elaborate further on the classification of small and large entities to determine the viability of establishing of integral oversight units. Moreover, without a complete analysis of the performance of the existing internal oversight services in funds and programmes, it was difficult to pinpoint areas needing strengthening either internally or with direct assistance from OIOS. With reference to paragraphs 26, 27 and 28 of the draft report, one delegation questioned why the existing machinery had not allowed for enquiries and investigations when necessary. Another delegation expressed concern about the resource implications of the report and inquired whether additional funds would be necessary. The delegation also pointed out that the report would have to be seen in light of the ambiguities contained in General Assembly resolution 48/218 B.

258. One delegation introduced a draft decision, as orally amended, underlining the importance of oversight mechanisms to the General Assembly as well as to the Executive Boards of funds and programmes. One delegation expressed the view that any decision of the Executive Board should only endorse those recommendations of the draft report that aimed at strengthening the internal oversight function in the funds and programmes.

259. The Officer-in-charge of OIOS thanked the Executive Board for its extensive analysis and comments. The challenge for the Office was to provide better services and handle increasing appeals to improve internal controls within existing resources. The draft report of the Secretary-General on internal oversight in funds and programmes would take into account the positions of the different Executive Boards of funds and programmes. He noted that one comparative advantage of OIOS was its presence in different geographical areas, including attachment to United Nations peacekeeping operations. That meant the availability of immediate dispatch from regional centres to any locations when problems arose. He also suggested that reciprocity could be utilized if funds and programmes had auditors present in a particular region. He also underlined that the present draft report was an initial step in closer coordination between OIOS and the oversight mechanisms in funds and programmes. The Office did not have a mandate to assess the internal oversight mechanisms of funds and programmes. He also noted that the process included the opportunity for mutual feedback and sharing of experiences between the United Nations and the funds and

programmes. The goal was to establish legislated cooperation and coordination. Sounder assessment of oversight services was the next step. With regard to reporting, he noted that the Office submitted information for the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on OIOS, with statistical information on the number of audits and evaluations, and information on results and structure of recommendations, as well as on assessment of the status of internal controls. Member States had been enthusiastic about those reporting arrangements; hence, a similar format and concept was suggested for internal oversight functions in funds and programmes.

260. The Director of the UNDP Division of Audit and Management Review stated that UNDP had been concerned about the governance issues referred to in the draft report, in particular reporting which would bypass the Executive Board. He noted the usefulness of an annual report to the Board on internal oversight in UNDP as a means of facilitating discussion with the Board in that important area. He also stated that while UNDP had a relatively large audit function, it was not visualized that separate units within that structure would be created. The statements made by delegations in support of reporting arrangements through the Board to the Economic and Social Council were welcomed by UNDP.

261. The Deputy Executive Director for Policy and Administration of UNFPA stated that the Fund was keenly aware of the importance of oversight mechanisms to ensure accountability. The draft report and oral statements had been very useful. UNFPA had long prioritized the strengthening of its evaluation, monitoring and audit functions under the Fund's policy of decentralization. He welcomed the results of the discussion in the Executive Board regarding the clarification of reporting arrangements and noted that it would be useful for delegations to consider the unique characteristics of small organizations such as UNFPA with regard to oversight.

262. One delegation emphasized the need in future discussions on the subject to involve the Executive Board fully. It was also essential that the reporting line be from the Board to the Economic and Social Council to the General Assembly.

263. Following discussions in an informal session, the Executive Board decided not to adopt a decision on oversight services in funds and programmes. It was agreed that an annual report of UNDP/UNFPA/OPS on internal oversight would be presented to the Executive Board on a yearly basis, beginning in 1997. The Board decided to convey the results of the discussion on the subject held at the present session to the Office for Internal Oversight Services, in compliance with General Assembly resolution 48/218 B, which would reflect the view of the Executive Board of UNDP and UNFPA, as requested by the Secretary-General.

Executive Board field visit to China

264. The representative of Zaire, team coordinator of the Executive Board field visit to China, undertaken from 5 to 18 February 1996, presented the mission report on the visit of the Executive Board. He expressed the team's gratitude to the Government and to all representatives of non-governmental organizations and individuals that the team had met while in China. He underlined the important contribution of the UNDP Resident Representative and the UNFPA Country

Representative to ensuring the success of the mission. Noting the conditions of poverty in the areas in the interior regions of China visited by the team, he encouraged the international community to join in efforts to achieve development in China.

265. The representative of China thanked the team for its report and in particular for its visit to the poverty-stricken areas of China. He stated that it had enhanced the understanding of both donors and recipients and would help to improve decision-making in the Executive Board. He invited the Executive Board to visit China again in a future field visit.

266. Several members of the team encouraged the Executive Board to review the report and comment on it. They emphasized the usefulness of the mission in helping Board members to understand the work of UNDP and UNFPA in a programme country. The findings could be applied to situations in other countries. Moreover, coming soon after the General Assembly's triennial policy review of operational activities, the mission had been timely as far as regarded the examination of coordination and the relationship of UNDP and UNFPA with the Bretton Woods institutions. The team found that both organizations played invaluable roles in China, which could not be substituted by other multilateral institutions or non-governmental organizations. It was vital that the reports of field visits garnered substantial feedback with adequate discussion in the Executive Board.

267. One delegation underlined that 100 per cent of China's programme was implemented by the Government. In response to a query from another delegation, it was explained that the term "parallel financing", mentioned in the report, referred to the tendency, given the difficulty of resource mobilization in China, for bilateral donors to have their own separate agendas. More information was sought on whether China had made efforts to achieve the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development. In response, one of the team members explained that that was a complex issue which could not be addressed adequately during the limited time available at the current session.

268. The Executive Board took note of the report on the field visit to China.

UNDP Financial Regulations and Rules

269. One delegation wished to bring to the notice of the Executive Board a matter regarding the 10 March 1995 communication sent to Governments regarding modifications to the Financial Regulations and Rules of UNDP. The provisions of the decisions of the Executive Board, the Governing Council and the General Assembly had now been incorporated. He wished to note for the record that Governing Council decision 92/36, dated 26 May 1992, had been omitted from those cited. He requested that the secretariat take the required measures to correct the Financial Regulations and Rules to incorporate the provisions of Governing Council decision 92/36.

UNDP communication and information programme

270. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/22. UNDP communication and information programme

The Executive Board

1. Reaffirms the importance of public information and advocacy measures to promote increased awareness and better understanding of the activities of the United Nations Development Programme;

2. Requests the Administrator in this context to take into consideration accessibility and the linguistic balances, including the development of the electronic dissemination of information;

3. Encourages the Administrator to present an information and publication policy, in the context of the mandate of the United Nations Development Programme and in consultation with the members of the Programme, so that account will be taken of the need to prioritize its publications with special attention to the risk of duplication with other publications of the United Nations and the financial and human constraints of the Programme;

4. Requests the Administrator to submit to the Executive Board prior to examination of the biennial budget estimates for 1998-1999, the policy document referred to in paragraph 3 above;

5. Further requests the Administrator to present in the document of the biennial budget estimates for 1998-1999 the detailed costs of publications and of their distribution.

29 March 1996

271. The Executive Board concluded its work by adopting the following decision:

96/24. Overview of decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its second regular session 1996

The Executive Board

Recalls that during the second regular session 1996 it:

ITEM 1: ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Approved the agenda and work plan for its second regular session 1996 (DP/1996/L.6 and Corr.1);

Approved the report of the first regular session 1996 (DP/1996/11);

Approved the following schedule of future sessions of the Executive Board subject to the approval of the Committee on Conferences:

Annual session 1996: 6-17 May 1996 - Geneva

Third regular session 1996: 9-13 September 1996

First regular session 1997: 13-17 January 1997

Second regular session 1997: 10-14 March 1997

Annual session 1997: 5-16 May 1997 - New York

Third regular session 1997: 15-19 September 1997*

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* Subject to authorization by the General Assembly.

Agreed to the subjects to be discussed at the next two sessions as listed in the annex;

ITEM 2: UNFPA: STRATEGY FOR ALLOCATION OF UNFPA RESOURCES

Adopted decision 96/15 of 27 March 1996 on the allocation of resources to UNFPA country programmes;

ITEM 3: UNFPA: COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

Adopted decision 96/13 of 26 March 1996 on the future country programming process of UNFPA;

Approved the UNFPA country programme for Cape Verde (DP/FPA/CP/153);

Approved the UNFPA country programme for Ghana (DP/FPA/CP/151);

Approved the UNFPA country programme for Chad (DP/FPA/CP/150);

Approved the extension of, and additional resources for, the UNFPA country programme for the Congo (DP/FPA/1996/16);

Approved the UNFPA country programme for the Syrian Arab Republic (DP/FPA/CP/152);

Approved the extension of, and additional resources for, the UNFPA country programme for Bolivia (DP/FPA/1996/12);

ITEM 4: UNFPA: EFFECTIVENESS OF THE UNFPA PUBLICATIONS PROGRAMME

Adopted decision 96/18 of 28 March 1996 on the UNFPA publications programme;

ITEM 5: UNFPA: ROLE OF UNFPA IN ASSESSING AND MEETING CONTRACEPTIVE REQUIREMENTS AND LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT NEEDS

Adopted decision 96/14 of 26 March 1996 on the role of UNFPA in assessing and meeting contraceptive requirements and logistics management needs;

ITEM 6: UNFPA: MEMBERSHIP IN THE UNICEF/WHO JOINT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH POLICY

Adopted decision 96/17 of 28 March 1996 on inter-agency coordination in health policy and programming;

ITEM 7: UNFPA/UNDP: HARMONIZATION OF PRESENTATION OF BUDGETS AND ACCOUNTS

Took note of the oral report of the Administrator and the Executive Director on the harmonization of presentation of budgets and accounts and the comments made thereon;

ITEM 8: UNFPA/UNDP: JOINT AND CO-SPONSORED UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON HIV/AIDS

Adopted decision 96/16 of 28 March 1996 on the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS);

ITEM 9: UNDP: AGENCY SUPPORT COSTS

Adopted decision 96/23 of 29 March 1996 on agency support costs;

ITEM 10: UNDP: COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS

Took note of the overview report on mid-term reviews (DP/1996/12) and the comments made thereon;

Took note of the mid-term review of the fourth country programme for Mozambique (DP/1996/12/Add.1);

Took note of the mid-term review of the fifth country programme for the Lao People's Democratic Republic (DP/1996/12/Add.2);

Took note of the mid-term review of the first country programme for the Republic of Yemen (DP/1996/12/Add.3);

Took note of the mid-term review of the fifth country programme for Brazil (DP/1996/12/Add.4);

Took note of the mid-term review of the fifth country programme for Romania (DP/1996/12/Add.5);

Took note of the oral report on follow-up to Executive Board decision 96/11 on UNDP assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

ITEM 11: UNDP: FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Adopted decision 96/21 of 29 March 1996 on UNDP financial, budgetary and administrative matters;

ITEM 12: UNDP: EVALUATION

Adopted decision 96/20 of 29 March 1996 on evaluation;

ITEM 13: UNDP: ASSISTANCE TO THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

Adopted decision 96/19 of 29 March 1996 on UNDP assistance to the Palestinian people;

ITEM 14: OTHER MATTERS

Agreed to forego a decision on the draft report of the Secretary-General on enhancing the internal oversight mechanisms in operational funds and services at the current meeting and that the report of the Executive Board will reflect fully the statements made and the positions of all the members of the Board on the matter;

Adopted decision 96/22 of 29 March 1996 on UNDP communication and information programme;

Took note of the report on the field visit to China.

29 March 1996

Annex

ALLOCATION OF SUBJECTS FOR FUTURE SESSIONS

The following subjects are scheduled for consideration at future sessions:

Annual session (6-17 May 1996 - Geneva)

Item 1. Organizational matters

Item 2. Rules of procedure

UNFPA segment

Item 3. Report of the Executive Director and programme-level activities

Item 4. Mission statement of UNFPA

UNFPA/UNDP segment

Item 5. Reports to the Economic and Social Council

Item 6. Harmonization of presentation of budgets and accounts

UNDP segment

Item 7. Annual report of the Administrator and related matters (including Initiatives for change)

Item 8. Matters relating to the programming cycles:

- Implementation of the new programming arrangements: interim report

Item 9. Agency support costs

Item 10. United Nations Volunteers

Item 11. United Nations Development Fund for Women

Item 12. United Nations Office for Project Services

Item 13. Other matters

Third regular session (9-13 September 1996)

- Organizational matters

UNFPA segment

- Financial, budgetary and administrative matters
- Country programmes and related matters

UNFPA/UNDP segment

- Harmonization of presentation of budgets and accounts
- Reports on field visits

UNDP segment

- Matters relating to programming cycles: Follow-up to Executive Board decisions 95/23 and 95/26
- Country programmes and related matters
- Financial, budgetary and administrative matters
- United Nations Development Fund for Women
    - Follow-up to Executive Board decisions 95/18 and 95/32
- Report on the activities of the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office

1997 sessions

First regular session 1997	13-17 January 1997
Second regular session 1997	10-14 March 1997
Annual session 1997	5-16 May 1997
Third regular session 1997	15-19 September 1997*

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* Subject to authorization by the General Assembly.

Part three

ANNUAL SESSION

Held at United Nations Headquarters from 25 to 29 March 1996

I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

1. The President, H. E. Mrs. Annette des Iles (Trinidad and Tobago), opened the annual session 1996 of the Executive Board. She welcomed all members and observers to the current session, which was the third annual session of the Board since its creation in 1994. She noted that the past years had been extremely productive, with the adoption of new legislative frameworks for UNDP and UNFPA programming arrangements and biennial budgets for 1996-1997, as well as the implementation of successful new working methods for the procedures of the Board.

2. During the current session, it was hoped that the mission statements of UNDP and UNFPA would be endorsed by the Executive Board. The Board would consider the annual reports of the Executive Director of UNFPA and the Administrator of UNDP. The new direction of UNFPA following the International Conference on Population and Development, and the work of UNDP in implementing its initiatives for change in the four focus areas of poverty eradication, employment, environment, and the advancement of women, would also be taken up. The Board would also consider the report of the Administrator on the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) (DP/1996/22) and hold a special event marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of UNV. In addition, based on the experience acquired during the previous two and one half years in the working methods of the Executive Board, rules of procedure for the Board would be considered. The remaining items to be considered were contained in the provisional agenda.

3. The President informed the Executive Board that the Bureau had held three meetings since the second regular session 1996: on 12 April, 23 April and 6 May. The Bureau had reviewed matters before the annual session and had held preliminary discussion on the issue of the rules of procedure, which would be taken up under item 2 of the agenda of the annual session. The President informed the Board that all meetings would commence on time in order to make the optimal use of conference services available.

4. The Secretary of the Executive Board noted that documents referred to in document DP/1996/L.7/Rev.1 had been submitted to the United Nations Office for Conference Services on time except for the report on the second regular session (DP/1996/17). Most documents had been available in all official languages by 23 April, the date of the pre-session informal briefing. All documents had been distributed to members of the Executive Board at their Missions to the United Nations in New York and were currently available at the documents distribution centre in Geneva. In keeping with the directives of the United Nations Secretariat, there would not be a documentation booth in the conference room in which the Board was convening.

5. Other documentation available to the Executive Board included the rules of procedure for: (a) the Governing Council of UNDP and UNFPA; (b) the United Nations Children's Fund; and (c) the Economic and Social Council. Revised mission statements for UNDP and UNFPA, based on comments made at the pre-session informal briefing on 23 April and on those received in writing from delegations, would also be made available in conference

room papers in English, French and Spanish. A conference room paper on agency support costs, requested by the Executive Board at its second regular session 1996 and incorporating comments made at the informal briefing on 23 April, was also available. The Board would also receive a conference room paper containing an interim report on the work of the working group on documentation, to be considered under item 2. Also available to the Executive Board would be: the 1996-1997 UNDP Plan (English only); the executive summary of the "Assessment of UNDP", sponsored by the Governments of Denmark, India, Sweden and the United Kingdom (English, French and Spanish); part II of the guidelines on the implementation of the successor programming arrangements (English, French and Spanish); and publications of the UNDP Office of Development Studies.

6. The Secretary further noted that the annual session 1996 had been scheduled earlier than in previous years in order to comply with legislation adopted by the Economic and Social Council in 1995, which required that the report of the Executive Board on that session be submitted to the substantive session of the Council in 1996. For that reason, the Executive Board would have to adopt its report on the last day of the annual session. While it was hoped that there would be sufficient time to allow for most of the report be translated and made available to the Board in all the official languages, portions to be discussed on Wednesday, 15 May would be available only in the language of submission.

7. The Secretary informed the Executive Board that, owing to financial constraints, there would be no night sessions. However, informal consultations could be held in the evening, with sound facilities available.

8. The Executive Board approved the following agenda for its annual session, as contained in document DP/1996/L.7/Rev.1.

Item 1. Organizational matters

Item 2. Rules of procedure

UNFPA segment

Item 3. UNFPA: Report of the Executive Director and programme-level activities

Item 4. UNFPA: Mission statement of the United Nations Population Fund

UNFPA/UNDP segment

Item 5. UNFPA/UNDP: Reports to the Economic and Social Council

Item 6. UNFPA/UNDP: Harmonization of presentation of budgets and accounts

UNDP segment

Item 7. UNDP: Annual report of the Administrator and related matters (including initiatives for change)

Item 8. UNDP: Matters relating to the programming cycles:

- Implementation of the successor programming arrangements
- Request from the Government of Namibia for special status equivalent to that of a least developed country

Item 9. Agency support costs
Item 10. United Nations Volunteers
Item 11. United Nations Development Fund for Women
Item 12. United Nations Office for Project Services
Item 13. Other matters

9. One delegation noted that it had received the documentation for the annual session in Spanish for the first time only at the beginning of the annual session. The Secretary responded that the matter would be investigated.

10. The Executive Board approved the work plan, contained in document DP/1996/L.7/Rev.1, as revised and distributed.

11. The Executive Board approved the report of the second regular session 1996 (DP/1996/17 and Corr.1).

12. The Executive Board approved the following schedule of future sessions of the Executive Board, subject to the approval of the Committee on Conferences:

Third regular session 1996: 9-13 September 1996
First regular session 1997: 13-17 January 1997
Second regular session 1997: 10-14 March 1997
Annual session 1997: 12-23 May 1997 (New York)
Third regular session 1997: 15-19 September 1997

13. The Executive Board approved the overview of decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its annual session 1996 (95/34). It also agreed to the subjects to be discussed at the third regular session 1996 and first regular session 1997, as listed in the annex to the overview decision.

14. The Executive Board adopted the report on its annual session as contained in documents DP/1996/L.13 and Add.1-11 and in the advance copy of the remaining parts of the report as agreed to earlier (see paragraph 6 above) and as orally amended. The report would be issued in final form as document DP/1996/19.

15. The Administrator and President made brief statements thanking all who had participated in the annual session 1996.

II. RULES OF PROCEDURE

16. The Secretary of the Executive Board delivered a statement on the question of rules of procedure for the Executive Board. She noted that following the transformation of the UNDP Governing Council into the Executive Board on 1 January 1994, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/162 of 20 December 1993, the Board had held a preliminary discussion of rules of procedure at its first regular session 1994. While various proposals had been made, and issues for consideration identified, the Board had determined that there was no urgency in adopting formal rules and that the Board would gradually identify its own needs in that respect.

17. The Executive Board did, however, take a number of decisions concerning its working methods at that time, including abolishing the three subsidiary bodies of the former Governing Council and with regard to the format and length of Board decisions and discontinuation of summary records. The Secretary reported on indicators such as the decrease in the number of meetings, number of decisions, and total volume of documentation since the inception of the Board. Other factors were participation of observers in all formal and informal sessions and briefings, reduced use of written statements, and adoption of decisions by consensus. The Bureau had played a role in structuring and managing the debates and in ensuring dialogue and transparency in decision-making.

18. Working methods that needed the further attention of the Executive Board included: the division of labour between the annual and regular sessions; the relationship between the scheduling of sessions and documentation distribution, particularly in languages; and length of documentation. With regard to the latter, the Executive Board had established, in its decision 96/6, a working group to review the issue.

19. At the first regular session 1996, the Executive Board had been requested to revisit the question of rules of procedure at the annual session 1996. A review of working methods was also requested.

20. One delegation presented the interim report of the working group on documentation (DP/1996/CRP.11). The working group, formed in accordance with Executive Board decision 96/6, had been set up primarily to address the question of timely distribution of Board documentation in languages. It had considered the length of documentation, submission of documents to the United Nations Office of Conference and Support Services (UNOCSS), electronic distribution of documents, and the translation and processing of documentation outside the United Nations system. The delegation noted that with reference to those items, it had been necessary to consider other questions relating to the work of the Board, and it was thus premature for the working group to offer specific recommendations. It was hoped that the Board's discussion at the annual session would give impetus for further progress. The participation and assistance of the secretariats of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, as well as UNOCSS, in the working group, was much appreciated.

21. Many delegations took the floor with recommendations and comments on rules of procedure and working methods of the Executive Board. Several delegations emphasized the need to adopt rules of procedure. One delegation requested the secretariat to prepare draft rules of procedure for consideration by the Executive Board, taking into account the views expressed by delegations during discussion of the item.

22. One delegation distributed an informal paper on the functioning of the Executive Board. In introducing the paper, the delegation noted that working methods had improved in the two years of the Board's existence and that continued dialogue was important. The paper was intended to aid the discussion on improved functioning and an enhanced relationship between the Board and the Secretariats of UNDP and UNFPA. While better dialogue among Board members and more action-oriented, decision-making characterized the work of the Board, problems remained, including an overloaded agenda and a tendency toward micromanagement, which had generated additional agenda items and reports. Some options for solving the problems were: (a) to adopt formal rules of procedure; (b) as a part of the review of the agenda, to take a better look at how meetings were planned and decisions implemented; (c) create a better standard of reporting and a more flexible system of reporting; and (d) use reports more effectively. The proposal was aimed at enabling the secretariats to prepare better for the Board sessions and to ensure enhanced quality of Executive Board products. It was not a fixed format, but one that should promote predictability. A central element of the proposal was the introduction of an annual discussion of the work plan. Several delegations supported the proposal, which they said was a good framework for discussion.

23. One delegation, supported by others, introduced a draft decision that proposed the establishment of an ad hoc open-ended working group on the rules of procedure of the Executive Board. It was in response to support expressed during the discussion on the formalizing of rules of procedure in order to avoid future problems. It was noted that the mandate of the working group must be clearly defined.

24. Another delegation, supported by others, proposed a draft decision that would place a time limit on the length of statements.

25. Seven principles for the examination of working methods and rules of procedure were elaborated by one representative, namely: efficiency, effectiveness of work, transparency, effective participation of delegations, establishment of constructive dialogue among delegations, self-criticism and a sense of humour.

26. With regard to documentation, delegations referred to the considerations raised by the working group. Speakers noted that timeliness and quality of reports should be ensured, documentation should be accessible to observers at the same time as members, and that there should be discipline in requesting reports and policy papers on the part of the Executive Board. Some recommended that documentation be circulated directly to capitals. The implications of cost and work load to the secretariat should also be examined. It was pointed out that documents were the basis of work and that the Board was not satisfied with the current system of

distribution. Moreover, documents were not available in all languages early enough, which prevented an effective functioning of the Board. However, it was recognized that the situation was not the fault of the secretariats of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, but rather a systemic problem affecting the translation and preparation of documents throughout the United Nations system. It was also noted that the electronic distribution of documentation, while not a substitute for hard copies, should comply with the rules on languages. In that regard, one delegation asked that technical advisory services in the use of Internet be provided to missions. The length of documents should be a function of the importance of the subject; conference room papers should be used as a way of presenting shorter documents. The use and cost of "yellow" (advance) copies, issued only in English, was questioned by some delegations while others supported their continuation as they found the advance texts useful even if available in only one language. Concern about the cost of external translation for conference room papers was also raised. One delegation underlined that General Assembly resolution 50/11 of 2 November 1995 on multilingualism must be adhered to.

27. One delegation noted that the outcome of discussions on the follow-up to General Assembly resolution 48/162 should be taken into consideration.

28. Several delegations underlined the important role of observers in the Executive Board and sought clarification on what rules were being used regarding their participation. The need to make some distinction between members and observers was noted. A few speakers cautioned against following the UNICEF rules of procedure in that area.

29. Some delegations asked for a review of the number and length of sessions, with some support expressed for two regular sessions and one annual session. It was noted that the scheduling of sessions could be flexible, according to the agenda. One delegation requested that separate sessions be devoted to UNDP and UNFPA matters, for example, the first session to UNDP and the second to UNFPA.

30. With regard to the agenda, speakers stressed the importance of rationalizing the discussion of subjects, the periodicity in reporting on items, use of intersessional meetings, and timing of items. One delegation queried whether longer sessions would be needed. A list of priorities could be compiled, based on Executive Board and institutional needs for review at the third regular session 1996. There was general support for continued dialogue on the working methods of the Executive Board as it was a process that could be refined over time. The next step would be to adopt a workplan for the Board's work in 1997. One delegation underlined the need for the annual session to focus on strategy and policy issues in order to attract more political interest in capitals.

31. Other issues raised included the venue of Executive Board sessions, the need for punctuality in meetings and limiting the length of statements and the number of interventions on the same item. Decisions should also be limited in length and number. One delegation urged the Board to itensify its perserverence in achieving its real mission - to fight poverty - and in that light, to limit the use of human and financial resources spent on

documentation. Another delegation suggested that two Secretariats, one for UNDP, and one for UNFPA, were needed. One delegation underlined the need to have all in-session documentation available in languages. He referred specifically to draft decisions, which had in some cases during the annual session been issued in one language only, with delegations having little time to review the text prior to its adoption. He urged the Secretariat to allow more time in future sessions to review decisions that were available in one language only.

32. In response to a suggestion from the Administrator that a special event be held in conjunction with the annual session of the Executive Board, it was noted that the Board itself should be organized so as to attract high-level participation and stimulate dialogue.

33. The Secretary responded to a number of queries. She noted that "yellow" documents were issued in the language in which they were written, which was usually English. Yellow copies cost between $20,000-25,000 per year and were funded from the Executive Board Secretariat budget. UNDP did not pay for the translation of official Board documentation, which came out of the United Nations budget. With regard to the production of documentation, she reiterated that the United Nations Secretariat should not be faulted since the problem was larger than just the consideration of UNDP and UNFPA documents. The additional costs of translation of conference room papers into working languages were not high. She stated that the annotated agenda provided an overall view of each Executive Board session, as requested by one delegation. In response to another delegation, she noted that Executive Board field visits were carried out in close consultation with Permanent Missions to the United Nations in New York.

34. One delegation, supported by others, proposed that in the interests of advancing further the effectiveness of the Executive Board, and in common with similar arrangements in other forums, that the Board should adopt a voluntary time limit of five minutes for statements. It further proposed that to assist in the observance of this voluntary time limit, the secretariat should provide a "traffic light". The Executive Board decided to agree to this proposal, which would be implemented on a trial basis at the third regular session 1996. It was agreed that the rule should also apply to statements made by the Secretariat, with a number of delegations agreeing that some flexibility could be incorporated in that regard.

35. The Executive Board approved the following decision:

96/25. Matters relating to rules of procedure, documentation and the functioning of the Executive Board

The Executive Board

A. Rules of procedure

1. *Decides* to convene an open-ended *ad hoc* working group on rules of procedure for the Executive Board and requests the Secretary of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the

United Nations Population Fund to assist and support the consultations, inter alia, through the preparation of adequate documentation;

2. Requests the President of the Executive Board to report to the Executive Board at its third regular session 1996 on the progress achieved during the process with a view to reaching a final decision on rules of procedure at the first regular session of the Executive Board in January 1997;

B. Working group on documentation

3. Takes note of the interim report of the working group on documentation and the comments made thereon by the Executive Board at its annual session 1996 and encourages the working group on documentation to finalize its work and present a report, including recommendations, to the Executive Board at its third regular session 1996;

C. Functioning of the Executive Board

4. Emphasizes the need to ensure that the approach to the working methods of the Executive Board continue to be flexible and practical;

5. Decides to introduce an annual work plan for the Executive Board and requests the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund to prepare, for the third regular session, an outline of issues that could be considered by the Board in 1997, based on previous deliberations of the Board and the organizational priorities and objectives set for 1997, with a view to adopting a work plan for the Board at the first regular session 1997, based on the proposals made on this matter by delegations during the annual session 1996;

6. Recognizes the need for further work to be done on improving the quality and relevance of documentation submitted to the Board and to review the agenda of the Board in order to focus deliberations at each session of the Executive Board.

15 May 1996

III. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND PROGRAMME-LEVEL ACTIVITIES

A. Report of the Executive Director for 1995

36. In her introduction to the annual report of UNFPA for 1995 (DP/FPA/1996/17 (Part I)), the Executive Director focused on some of the activities, preoccupations and achievements of UNFPA during 1995, which had been a year of change and transition for the Fund. In working to meet the unprecedented challenge posed by the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), UNFPA had gone through a period of self-examination. As a result, it had redefined its programme directions, its resource allocation system, its policy guidelines, its programming procedures and a number of its financial and managerial processes in order to take account of the new programme priorities resulting from the Cairo conference and in order to increase its overall programme effectiveness.

37. Through various consultations and in-house brainstorming sessions, UNFPA had sought to deal with a number of key concerns, such as: the implications for UNFPA of the ICPD Programme of Action and of the recommendations of other recent international conferences; the comparative advantage of UNFPA in the population field; how to achieve a better focus for the Fund's assistance, which meant redefining the resource allocation system; how to become the best advocate for sensitive issues, such as those involving the reproductive health of adolescents; the definition of the Fund's mission for the next 10 years; and the elaboration of methods of collaboration with other organizations both inside and outside the United Nations system. In all those discussions, UNFPA had stressed the utmost importance of accountability and management efficiency and the need to better monitor and evaluate UNFPA-assisted programmes.

38. The Executive Director reviewed the financial and programme highlights of the Fund during 1995, noting in particular the progress made in programme delivery, the substantial three-year decline in carry-forwards, the decline in the percentage of the administrative and programme support services (APSS) budget in relation to income, and the notable increase in resources in terms of both percentage and volume to sub-Saharan Africa. She then stressed the importance of resource mobilization and noted that UNFPA would vigorously pursue a strategy that would seek to convince programme countries and donors to follow up on their ICPD commitments.

39. The past year had been one of intense activity and change for UNFPA, and the Fund had no intention of slowing down. Considerable challenges remained. UNFPA had to strengthen the capacity of its field offices and streamline the relationship between field offices and headquarters. It also had to maintain vigilance to ensure the Fund's accountability, promote national capacity-building and enhance national execution, and improve monitoring, evaluation and audit systems. Above all, UNFPA was fully aware of the need to become more results-oriented and to better demonstrate what had been achieved with UNFPA support.

40. In commenting on the report of the Executive Director for 1995, several delegations stated that the report gave a very good overview of the Fund's activities during the preceding year. They felt that it clearly showed that 1995 had been a very important year for UNFPA in terms of re-orienting the programme in the direction of the ICPD Programme of Action and in training the Fund's staff in that new orientation. One delegation stated that UNFPA activities in terms of revising guidelines and holding seminars and workshops to bring all of the staff "on board" with the new programme priorities had been a wise course in the period immediately following the ICPD and that had been clearly spelled out in the report.

41. However, many delegations felt that the report as presented did not clearly lay out the Fund's strategy for implementing the ICPD and that it was not analytical enough in terms of examining the past year. Others noted that it did not provide an assessment of lessons learned nor did it give concrete examples of results that had been achieved. Several of those delegations noted that their remarks were intended to be constructive criticism designed to help UNFPA. In that regard, two of the delegations stated that they considered that the Fund was performing better than any of the other major United Nations programmes.

42. Indeed, several delegations stated that the problems that were perceived with the annual report and with other documentation were really endemic to the United Nations system as a whole: a lack of frankness; an unwillingness to discuss lessons learned in terms of problems and failures encountered; a lack of concrete examples of how programmes were either working or not working. One delegation said that in reading many of the reports one would get the idea that there had never been any failures, which everyone knew was not true. What the Executive Board really wanted to know was what had been learned from situations that had not been complete successes.

43. Several delegations said that they felt that of all United Nations agencies and organizations UNFPA was perhaps one of those most conducive to change and that the Fund could lead the way by making its reports more open, clearer, more problem-oriented and more analytical.

44. In her reply, the Executive Director agreed with the frank assessment of United Nations reports. She felt that much of it was due to the organizational culture of the United Nations, but that there was no reason why that could not be changed for the better. She said that the UNFPA annual report could be improved but that delegations had to understand that it addressed a lot of sensitive issues, some more sensitive in some countries than others, and that had to be taken into account. She thought it would be possible to be more candid in some of the Fund's other documentation, such as its country programme presentations. She informed delegations that the Fund was adopting a new presentation for its country programmes, which would be used for the first time at the third regular session 1996 of the Executive Board, and she hoped that members would see that they answered many of the concerns expressed in the day's discussions.

45. Several delegations commented on the working of the Executive Board, stating that they felt that discussions inside the Board should also be

more open and frank. Several agreed with the Executive Director, who had said that the discussions should be more of an unrehearsed dialogue and a real interchange of ideas rather than the occasion for Governments to present prepared statements. Several delegations also agreed that the discussions should be more focused, with the annual session being devoted to policy questions.

46. The question of assistance to Africa in order to meet its special needs was brought up by several delegations. They noted that UNFPA had made great strides in re-directing its assistance to countries most in need, many of which were in Africa, but that much remained to be done. In that regard, the need for increasing the absorptive capacity of African countries by capacity-building activities was emphasized by many delegations. One delegation pointed out that it was unfair to single out Africa when talking about "problems": that increasing absorptive capacity was a requirement for many countries around the world and that many non-African countries could benefit from the African experience and vice versa.

47. The Executive Director reiterated the Fund's commitment to helping the countries of Africa and its wholehearted endorsement of the United Nations Special Initiative on Africa. She pointed out that the problem was often not a question of absorptive capacity but also of political commitment, and she concurred with the view that the problems were not specific to any one region of the world. The Fund was working to build up national capacity through training of national counterpart staff and by supporting national and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The Executive Director mentioned the important role that health reform played in the Special Initiative and stated that UNFPA would be an active and full partner in the reproductive health field.

48. Many delegations expressed satisfaction with the way that UNFPA had been able to incorporate important ICPD themes into its work programme: gender equity and equality and the empowerment of women, male responsibility and adolescent reproductive health concerns were among the examples cited by many. Requests were made for more concrete information on how the Fund's new guidelines for implementing the ICPD were actually being utilized. The Executive Director mentioned several areas: (a) she had set up policy application reviews to monitor implementation of guidelines at the country level; (b) resident coordinators had been asked to report on the guidelines for resident coordinators on implementing the ICPD; (c) the review process for all projects and programmes looked at how the substantive guidelines were being applied; and (d) the guidelines for technical support services were being revised to strengthen backstopping.

49. Several delegations commented on financial and budgetary questions, including the need to harmonize budget presentations by UNFPA, UNDP and UNICEF. The question of carry-forwards of income from one year to the next was raised by several delegations. They noted the positive trend of declining carry-forwards, as highlighted by the Executive Director in her statement, but they emphasized the need to monitor the trend carefully. In her reply, the Executive Director noted the considerable progress that had been made and stated that it was not always possible to control carry-

forwards since some income inevitably arrived late in the year and could not be spent until the following year. In any case, she did not want to discourage contributions, whatever time of year they arrived.

50. In relation to the slight decline in the percentage of the budget that was taken up by APSS costs (from 17 per cent in 1994 to 16 per cent in 1995), the Executive Director said that it was mainly a result of the large increase in income between the two years - although obviously she was pleased with the trend. One delegation pointed out that even though there was continuing emphasis on reducing administrative costs, it should not become a goal in itself and should not compromise the functioning of the organization. The Executive Director agreed with the statement and stated that all APSS components were being fully implemented.

51. In connection with the Executive Director's announcement that Ms. Kerstin Trone had been appointed to the position of Deputy Executive Director (Programme), several delegations congratulated Ms. Trone on her appointment and noted UNFPA's good record in appointing women to senior- and middle-level management positions. The Executive Director pointed out that 7 out of the 11 senior positions in the Fund were held by women. Several delegations commended UNFPA on its achievement and pointed out that it set a standard to be emulated by other organizations both inside and outside the United Nations system.

52. Questions were raised by several delegations about UNFPA's cooperation, and division of labour, with the Joint United Nations Programme on AIDS (UNAIDS). The Executive Director said that even though UNAIDS was a very new programme, cooperation between the two agencies had so far been excellent. UNFPA had seconded a staff member to UNAIDS and continued to supply condoms to many national HIV/AIDS prevention programmes in coordination with UNAIDS. In response to another question, the Executive Director said that the majority of the $20.5 million spent by UNFPA in the area of HIV/AIDS prevention had been in supplying condoms and that amount was only a small portion of the expenditures of the entire United Nations system on HIV/AIDS.

53. In response to the Executive Director's statement that the new designation of UNFPA Country Directors as UNFPA Representatives had enhanced the performance of the resident coordinator system, several delegations asked for more explicit information on the extent to which that change had been an improvement. The Executive Director stated that the new designation gave UNFPA greater visibility and improved capacity for coordinating population activities. The commitment of UNFPA to the resident coordinator system had also been shown by having the resident coordinator head the Fund's Project Appraisal Committee in each country.

54. Several delegations pointed out that the new emphasis following the ICPD on reproductive health, including family planning and sexual health, did not mean that UNFPA should downplay its area of greatest comparative advantage, i.e., population and family planning. One delegation emphasized that UNFPA had to make a firm commitment to stabilizing world population and had to make that its priority. The Executive Director stated that the Fund understood well where its comparative advantage lay and that it was

the only United Nations organization providing family planning services. She also said that the best way of stabilizing world population was to implement the ICPD Programme of Action.

55. Similarly, several delegations mentioned that reproductive health was only one of three core programme areas endorsed by the Executive Board in its decision 95/15. However, the other two - advocacy, and population and development strategies - had received comparatively little attention in the annual report for 1995. Several delegations mentioned the crucial role that both of those programme areas had to play. The Executive Director said that the report for 1995 had focused on reproductive health since it was a new concept being introduced into the Fund's work following the ICPD, and, as such, it had necessarily been the focus of much attention during the year, especially in terms of training staff and in re-orienting activities. However, that did not mean that the other two areas were being neglected, and they would be covered in more depth in subsequent annual reports.

56. Several delegations welcomed the Executive Director's explanation in her statement that UNFPA was working with the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) to reclassify the subcategories of the population section of its programme classification to conform to the three new core programme areas as spelled out in Executive Board decision 95/15. They stressed that the reclassification should be carried out in cooperation with other concerned organizations such as the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The Executive Director was able to report that that was being done.

57. The fact that UNFPA could not carry out its work effectively without an assured resource base was mentioned by several delegations. They called upon the world's countries to live up to the commitments they had made at the ICPD. They also asked what the Fund was doing to improve its fund-raising capabilities and to increase co-financing arrangements through multi-bilateral agreements. The Executive Director noted that the best way to raise more money was to have an effective programme, and she thought that UNFPA did. Of course, fund-raising was a major priority for the Fund's staff, which included working out co-financing arrangements. She noted, however, that such arrangements were labour-intensive and created burdens on staff time because of the financial monitoring and reporting requirements of the different donors.

58. A number of delegations mentioned that in order to measure the effectiveness of UNFPA programmes it was necessary to have a reliable and comparable set of indicators, or benchmarks, of progress. The Executive Director agreed completely with that view and stated that UNFPA was working in several forums, especially ACC, to develop such indicators. Indeed, the ACC Task Force on Basic Social Services for All, which had been set up by the Secretary-General, was developing a whole range of indicators in different social arenas, led by UNFPA in terms of population and demographic indicators. She agreed with delegations that performance had to be constantly monitored, which required indicators of programme impact.

59. One delegation asked the Executive Director what concrete steps had been taken for greater utilization of NGOs in the execution of UNFPA

projects, echoing the concerns of many delegations that greater reliance be placed on NGOs, as called for in the ICPD Programme of Action. Another delegation recalled the vital role that NGOs had to play in increasing community participation. The Executive Director stressed the important role that NGOS had to play in meeting population and reproductive health goals at both national and international levels. One problem, of course, was in finding appropriate NGOs that met UNFPA guidelines. The Fund had revised its criteria for assessing the managerial, financial and substantive capacity of NGOs and was continuing to identify and to help to strengthen appropriate NGOs.

60. Several delegations noted the Board's ongoing concern for better coordination with other United Nations agencies. In that connection, one delegation questioned the multiplication of coordination mechanisms within the United Nations system, which was found to be very confusing and possibly inimical to their avowed purpose. The Executive Director agreed, stating that she had spent 65-67 working days in 1995 on coordination activities and that there had been a proliferation of committees concerned with coordination. The process needed to be streamlined and made more efficient.

61. The need to continue to consolidate projects as a way of reducing administrative expenses was brought up by a number of delegations. The Executive Director reported that the trend in that regard was favourable and that perhaps the Fund should look at a different manner of presentation of the number of projects in the annual report for 1996 in order to make the trend more apparent.

62. One delegation questioned the lack of information on abortion in the annual report, stating that UNFPA had an important role to play not only in promoting family planning as way of reducing the incidence of abortion, but in terms of promoting reproductive health as well, by, for example, dealing with the consequences of unsuccessful abortions. The Executive Director replied that the Fund addressed abortion in the context of paragraph 8.25 of the ICPD Programme of Action.

63. One delegation asked what role UNFPA envisaged for the private sector in meeting the goals of the ICPD. The Executive Director said that in terms of contributions from private business she did not expect that to happen. She reported that she had met with many business leaders at a recent Davos Conference and that the next step was to try to convene a meeting of business leaders with a well-known business personality as the chair to consider the involvement of the business community in support of population and development programmes.

64. One delegation raised the question of whether holding the annual session in Geneva had not necessarily reduced the participation of developing countries, particularly of least developed countries. In her reply, the Executive Director said that, of course, UNFPA valued the input of those countries very much. The delegation of Switzerland later pointed out that the Governments of Switzerland and France had made available financial assistance, through UNDP, to cover the travel and daily subsistence costs of one New York-based representative from each of the

least developed African countries that were members of the Board, thereby enabling them to participate in the UNFPA segment of the agenda as well. The delegation argued that if certain missions of least developed countries had been unable to participate in the UNFPA segment, it was not owing to financial constraints nor to the fact that the session was held in Geneva.

65. The Executive Board took note of the annual report of the Executive Director for 1995 (DP/FPA/1996/17 (Part I)), taking into account the views expressed by delegations during the discussion on the item as reflected in the report on the session.

B. Work plan and financial implementation

66. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) introduced the work plan for 1997-2000 and request for programme expenditure authority (DP/FPA/1996/18 and Corr.1) and the status of financial implementation of country programmes and projects approved by the Governing Council and the Executive Board (DP/FPA/1996/19). He briefly reviewed the financial performance of UNFPA in 1995, emphasizing the reduction in carry-forwards from $33 million at the end of 1994 to $24.5 million at the end of 1995. In developing the proposed work plan 1997-2000, UNFPA had used a conservative estimate for 1996 income of $300 million and an annual increase in income of 8 per cent, leading to a total income for the work plan period of almost $1.5 billion, only slightly higher than the estimates in the 1996-1999 work plan, which had been presented at the 1995 annual session. With respect to the implementation of country programmes approved by the Governing Council and the Executive Board in past years, he stressed that UNFPA had essentially made resources available as planned.

67. In reviewing the performance of the Fund in 1995, several delegations voiced concern that in 1995 only 70 per cent of country resources had been allocated to priority countries and that allocations to reproductive health had decreased proportionately. Some delegations also raised questions on the reduction in the relative share of resources allocated to country activities in Asia. A number of delegations commended UNFPA for the decrease in the proportion of administrative expenditures in 1995.

68. With regard to the proposed work plan for 1997-2000, delegations generally expressed support for the financial planning figures although the projected income reduction in 1996 was of concern. One delegation requested that financial data for the current year be included in the future in order to facilitate an assessment of the calculations undertaken by UNFPA. Most delegations commented on the rate of annual income increase, estimated in the work plan at 8 per cent. In spite of the increase from 1994 to 1995, which had amounted to 19 per cent, a few delegations found the figure overly optimistic and requested additional information on UNFPA's strategy for mobilizing the necessary resources. One suggestion was made for UNFPA to simplify the procedures for multi-bilateral funding as a way of increasing the Fund's programme resources.

69. Delegations welcomed the efforts of UNFPA to implement the new resource allocation approach in a flexible and phased manner, but

some found the increases foreseen for Africa to be inadequate. One delegation sought assurances that despite the proportionate reduction in resources for Group B and C countries, assistance would increase in absolute terms. With regard to carry-forwards, some delegations suggested that measures should be taken to increase absorptive capacity in recipient countries in order to ensure that available resources were fully utilized.

70. Commenting on the format of the work plan, several delegations noted that it seemed to be mainly a financial plan showing general intentions of the use of estimated resources and did not integrate the Fund's strategic objectives into its resource planning process. They suggested that the work plan in future should contain substantive data, notably the intended resource use by programme area. A similar concern was expressed regarding the absence of more analytical information in the document on the status of financial implementation of country programmes since that would help to clarify the resource utilization rates of the various programmes.

71. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) responded to the concerns of the Executive Board regarding the performance of UNFPA in 1995 by referring to the new approach to resource allocation that was replacing the old system of priority countries and to the fact that the slight reduction in allocations to reproductive health had been offset by increases in the closely related areas of information, education and communication. He also emphasized that the resources allocated for the priority countries and for the reproductive health programme area had increased in absolute terms. With respect to the format of the work plan, he explained that it had been developed as a financial planning document at the request of the Governing Council. However, while resource allocation by programme area depended largely on the composition of individual country programmes, the incorporation of programme strategy objectives into future work plans would be reviewed.

72. With regard to the estimated rate of annual income increase, the Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) informed delegations that the estimate was based upon indications from donor countries and increases in the past, which had averaged 9.2 per cent over the last ten years. He stressed that since the work plan was a rolling plan, the income estimate would be adjusted annually in accordance with actual contributions received. In response to questions about the carry-forwards, he pointed out some of the measures taken by UNFPA to reduce such amounts, including the provision of training and the recruitment of national project personnel to increase absorptive capacities in programme countries. He assured delegations that the forecast of an average of 60 per cent of country resources for countries in Group A was a conservative one that would most likely be surpassed and that targets set by the Executive Board in decision 96/15 might well be reached by the year 2000, possibly even earlier.

73. The Executive Board took note of the status of financial implementation of country programmes and projects approved by the Governing Council and the Executive Board as contained in document DP/FPA/1996/19.

74. The Executive Board adopted the following decisions:

96/26. Work plan of the United Nations Population Fund for 1997-2000 and programme expenditure authority

The Executive Board

1. Endorses the programme resource planning proposals of the Executive Director set out in paragraphs 7 to 18 of document DP/FPA/1996/18;

2. Approves the request for the 1997 programme expenditure authority at a level equal to new programmable resources for 1997, currently estimated at $257 million;

3. Endorses the use of the following estimates of new programmable resources from regular resources for the 1998-2000 period: $279 million for 1998; $305 million for 1999; and $334 million for 2000;

4. Also endorses the use of the following estimates of new programmable resources from multi-bilateral funding: $15 million per year for the years 1997-2000.

8 May 1996

96/27. UNFPA: Enhancing the absorptive capacity and financial resource utilization in recipient countries, in particular in Africa

The Executive Board

1. Acknowledges the problem of absorptive capacity and financial resource utilization relating to population programmes in recipient countries, particularly in most African countries, especially the least-developed countries, as noted in the discussions on the reports of the Executive Director (DP/FPA/1996/17 (Part I) and DP/FPA/1996/19);

2. Requests the Executive Director to thoroughly study the problem within the framework of existing United Nations Population Fund institutional structures and systems, in consultation with relevant actors, including, as appropriate, development institutions that are familiar with the programmes of the United Nations Population Fund in recipient countries, particularly those in Africa;

3. Also requests that a study, as well as other means and activities to address this problem, should focus on concrete operational measures that the United Nations Population Fund can undertake to enhance the absorptive capacity and financial resource utilization related to population programmes in recipient countries, in particular, those in Africa. The concrete measures should draw on an analysis of the problems as they are encountered, primarily at the country level;

4. Further requests the Executive Director to present to the Executive Board at its annual session 1998, at the latest, as part of the annual report, concrete recommendations aimed at United Nations Population Fund actions to enhance the absorptive capacity and financial resource utilization in recipient countries, in particular those in Africa.

17 May 1996

C. Programme-level activities (Evaluation)

75. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) introduced the periodic report of the Executive Director on Evaluation (DP/FPA/1996/20), which outlined evaluation activities undertaken by UNFPA during the period 1994-1995. In noting that the number of evaluations of UNFPA-assisted projects continued to increase, she observed that evaluation planning within the Fund still required continued improvement to ensure that project design encompassed the critical elements needed for meaningful evaluations. She pointed to some common problems highlighted in recent evaluation findings, indicating that some of them required longer-term solutions.

76. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) informed the Executive Board that the present monitoring and evaluation system was under revision, with due account being given to the importance of harmonization within the United Nations system. She drew attention to the recently initiated system of policy application reviews to monitor compliance with UNFPA policies and procedures, including, inter alia, the use of evaluation results. The Board was informed of ongoing and planned evaluation activities, highlighting efforts to refine techniques and tools, particularly the development of indicators for programme performance.

77. Many delegations expressed their appreciation for the frankness and candour of the report and of the introductory statement by the Deputy Executive Director (Programme). The importance of evaluation as a management as well as a programming tool was emphasized. The Fund was urged to continue giving priority to evaluation and to the use of evaluation results for strategic programming. Concern was expressed that programme performance and achievements had not been systematically evaluated within the programme review and strategy development (PRSD) process and UNFPA was urged to increase its efforts in that regard.

78. There was general agreement with respect to the relevance and importance of the topics being studied in ongoing thematic evaluations, and the Fund was encouraged to conduct evaluations of similar key issues related to the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. Delegations welcomed the policy application review initiative and expressed a desire to be informed in due course of the findings of such reviews. The Fund was commended on the initiatives regarding indicators for programme performance and impact assessment, duly recognizing the inherent difficulties with respect to the latter. In the future, the Fund should provide the Executive Board not only with aggregate information on the impact of its endeavours but also with "snapshots" of how the lessons learned were being applied. The need to share lessons learned, both positive as well as negative, was emphasized by several delegations.

79. Several delegations pointed out that the evaluation and monitoring process was of value not just in terms of improving programme performance: another very important aspect was the building of national capacity. By fostering national participation in the evaluation process, the Fund would

enable countries to implement and manage their own programmes better and would instill a greater sense of ownership by the countries in which the programmes were being carried out. Also mentioned was the fact that an effective evaluation system was an important tool for resource mobilization since it fostered a sense of confidence that resources were being used wisely. One delegation pointed out that evaluation should not become an end in itself and that it was valuable as long as it was used to improve programme quality and performance. If it became too burdensome, the result would be self-defeating.

80. In reply to questions about what percentage of UNFPA programmes were evaluated, the Deputy Executive Director (Programme) replied that current guidelines required all projects and programmes to have a built-in evaluation component. The number that had an "independent", i.e., external, evaluation did not reach 100 per cent although there had been a continuous increase in recent years. Whether to include such an independent evaluation depended, as delegations had pointed out, on how cost-effective it was. On the question of impact evaluation, the Deputy Executive Director (Programme) said that it was very difficult to assign causality. If a country experienced improvements in its demographic and reproductive health situation, it was not possible to specify what part was the result of the UNFPA-assisted programme, but the Fund continued to work to develop indicators to measure impact as well as other aspects of programme performance.

81. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) welcomed comments by delegations on the need to include national expertise in evaluation exercises. The Fund recognized the value of doing so both in terms of drawing on the valuable expertise that existed in programme countries and in terms of the impetus that doing so gave to national capacity-building. She also agreed with delegations that it was necessary not just to produce syntheses of evaluations but to pass on lessons efficiently from one programme to another; the country support teams played a critical role in meeting that objective.

82. The Executive Board took note of the periodic report on evaluation as contained in document DP/FPA/1996/20.

IV. MISSION STATEMENT OF UNFPA

83. The Director of the Information and External Relations Division (IERD) introduced the UNFPA mission statement. He reported that the mission statement was being presented in response to Executive Board decision 95/15. The draft mission statement presented to the Board was the result of numerous consultations over the course of the past 16 months, beginning with a post-ICPD retreat of the UNFPA Management Committee, continuing through the Fund's Global Meeting in Rye, New York, in June 1995, where it was a prominent feature of the agenda. It was subsequently circulated in various versions to all UNFPA Professional staff, both in the field and in headquarters, and then, as a draft, to members of the Executive Board for their comments. The comments received from the staff and Executive Board members were incorporated into the mission statement in so far as possible while still maintaining the focus of the statement.

84. The Director of IERD said that the mission statement was designed to be used in the Fund's publications and for the media, public and staff as a brief statement of the purpose and principles of UNFPA. It would in no way alter the Fund's mandate, priorities, resource allocations or operational guidelines as set out for the Fund in various Executive Board decisions. The statement was seen as a public relations document intended for the general public, not as a United Nations document. Indeed, efforts had been made to make the language as clear as possible, accessible to those who might not be familiar with United Nations terminology.

85. The draft mission statement had been discussed with members of the Executive Board at an informal meeting of the Board on 23 April 1996. At that time, members of the Board had made various comments and suggestions. In response to those suggestions, UNFPA had revised the draft mission statement somewhat and that revised draft was now being presented to the Board as a conference room paper. The Director briefly explained the changes and noted how they responded to the suggestions made by delegations. He then solicited comments on the revised draft from the Board.

86. Several delegations said that they were pleased with the revised draft and felt that it reflected accurately the comments made at the informal meeting. One delegation offered some amendments to the revised draft, asking that the first paragraph be modified to reflect that UNFPA had to act according to priority areas and in full respect of the state policies of recipient countries and that the fifth paragraph and the last sentence of the sixth paragraph be deleted since they were unnecessary.

87. The suggestion for modifications on the part of one delegation engendered a number of comments. Several delegations stated that if there were changes to be made then they also had suggestions they would like to make. However, many delegations felt that it was inappropriate to start revising the draft and did not wish to negotiate changes in wording.

88. One delegation proposed that in the interests of clarity the second use of the phrase "these goals" in paragraph 4 be made more explicit by substituting the phrase "population stabilization". The proposal had the support of numerous delegations, but several delegations felt that, in fact, it changed the meaning of the paragraph. One observer delegation reported that its Government had reservations on paragraphs 3, 4, and 7 of the revised draft mission statement.

89. The discussion then turned on the question of whether the mission statement was a public relations document that could be issued by the Executive Director on her own authority, and on which the Executive Board could simply "take note", or whether it was a policy document that required endorsement by the Board. Both viewpoints were expressed by different delegations. The Board then called on the President for her advice, who asked the Executive Director for her views.

90. The Executive Director explained the process of how the mission statement was developed. It had originally been her idea, and, as stated by the Director of IERD, had been much discussed at the Rye meeting. When the Executive Director reported on those discussions to the Executive Board, members had also been very enthusiastic and had asked her to bring the statement to the Board for its input, which she had been very pleased to do. She had always seen that it was of value chiefly as an informational document to be used within UNFPA as well as with the general public. As such, it was entirely based upon the previously agreed policy directives of the Fund.

91. In response to some of the concerns raised by delegations during the discussion, the Executive Director noted that, as the mission statement said, UNFPA always and only acted at the request of Governments and therefore could in no way act contrary to Government wishes or national sovereignty. UNFPA also subscribed to internationally recognized human rights, and she thought that it was wise to include that in the statement since the largest number of questions posed to UNFPA by the media were about human rights. She reiterated once again that the mission statement did not, and could not, change the mandate of UNFPA.

92. The Executive Director informed the Executive Board that a precedent had been set recently when the Executive Board of UNICEF had endorsed the UNICEF mission statement. The mission statement of UNDP was being proposed to the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board the following week. Therefore, she felt that it was necessary that the Board endorse the UNFPA mission statement as well.

93. In discussions that followed, the Executive Board decided to accept certain minor modifications in the text in order to conform with language previously agreed upon or to rectify editorial omissions. However, the Board could not agree to accept the amendment to change the words "these goals" to "population stabilization" even though several delegations supported the amendment. In the interests of consensus, the proposal was therefore withdrawn.

94. The Executive Board decided that it would be possible to follow the Executive Director's request and endorse the proposed mission statement as long as the comments made by various delegations during the discussions were noted in the decision. With that stipulation, the Board felt that it could endorse rather than take note of the statement.

95. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/28. Mission statement of the United Nations Population Fund

The Executive Board

Endorses the mission statement attached as an annex to the present decision, taking into account the discussions that took place during the annual session 1996 of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund, as reflected in the report on agenda item 4 of the session, in particular paragraph 84.

8 May 1996

Annex

UNFPA MISSION STATEMENT

UNFPA extends assistance to developing countries, countries with economies in transition and other countries at their request to help them address reproductive health and population issues, and raises awareness of these issues in all countries, as it has since its inception.

UNFPA's three main areas of work are: to help ensure universal access to reproductive health, including family planning and sexual health, to all couples and individuals on or before the year 2015; to support population and development strategies that enable capacity-building in population programming; to promote awareness of population and development issues and to advocate for the mobilization of the resources and political will necessary to accomplish its areas of work.

UNFPA is guided by, and promotes, the principles of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (1994). In particular, UNFPA affirms its commitment to reproductive rights, gender equality and male responsibility, and to the autonomy and empowerment of women everywhere. UNFPA believes that safeguarding and promoting these rights, and promoting the well-being of children, especially girl children, are development goals in themselves. All couples and individuals have the right to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children as well as the right to the information and means to do so.

UNFPA is convinced that meeting these goals will contribute to improving the quality of life and to the universally accepted aim of stabilizing world population. We also believe that these goals are an integral part of all efforts to achieve sustained and sustainable social and economic development that meets human needs, ensures well-being and protects the natural resources on which all life depends.

UNFPA recognizes that all human rights, including the right to development, are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, as expressed in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Vienna Declaration and the Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women and in other internationally agreed instruments.

UNFPA, as the lead United Nations organization for the follow-up and implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, is fully committed to working in partnership with governments, all parts of the United Nations system, development banks, bilateral aid agencies, non-governmental organizations and civil society. UNFPA strongly supports the United Nations Resident Coordinator system and the implementation of all relevant United Nations decisions.

UNFPA will assist in the mobilization of resources from both developed and developing countries, following the commitments made by all countries in the Programme of Action to ensure that the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development are met.

V. REPORTS TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

96. The Executive Board had before it the reports of the Administrator (DP/1996/18/Add.2) and the Executive Director (DP/FPA/1996/17 (Part II)) to the Economic and Social Council, which were introduced by the Associate Administrator and the Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) of UNFPA respectively.

97. The Associate Administrator provided an overview of the four sections of the report, pointing out that the common format, agreed upon by UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP) represented a major step forward in joint reporting to the Economic and Social Council and would facilitate the work of delegations. Care had been taken to make the report more thorough, detailed and analytical in response to past concerns of delegations.

98. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) highlighted recent developments in the areas addressed by the report, in particular regarding inter-agency collaboration. He emphasized the progress that had been made towards increased harmonization of procedures and coordination of field-level activities. He also identified some of the problems and challenges contained in the report for discussion by the Economic and Social Council.

99. In his capacity as Chairman of the Inter-agency Task Force (IATF) on follow-up to the Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/56, the Director of the Geneva Office, Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), had been invited to the present session by the President to provide an overview of the work of the task force. He explained that the IATF had been established within the framework of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) in order to facilitate system-wide, coordinated follow-up to the resolution. The role of DHA was to support that work, to ensure that agencies were kept informed of progress in addressing the resolution and to undertake briefings with Member States. The Chairman of the IATF commended the report of the Administrator, indicating that UNDP had been an active member of both IATF and IASC, which was the principal mechanism for coordination among organizations involved in humanitarian activities. In referring further to the report, he highlighted three issues of key relevance to the work being done by UNDP: (a) resource mobilization, (b) the concurrent nature of relief and development activities, and (c) internally displaced persons (IDPs).

100. The Chairman noted that the Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeal (CAP) was not intended to raise resources for development and that additional work was required to establish consultative mechanisms to coordinate the mobilization of resources to meet country needs. In that regard, he referred to the presentation by UNDP of a comprehensive paper on resource mobilization as a positive contribution the work of the Consultative

Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) and IATF. Noting that relief activities did not take place in a vacuum but in the context of development and rehabilitation, he also appreciated the work that UNDP had been undertaking in the examination of the connection between relief and development, referring to the UNDP contribution to the CCPOQ examination of post-conflict recovery strategies. Referring to the UNDP paper on successor arrangements, the Chairman also welcomed UNDP initiatives foreseen under target for resource assignment from the core (line 1.1.3) (TRAC 3), which reflected a reassessment and contribution to the realignment of relationships between UNDP and other operational agencies. He also welcomed the prospect of UNDP making available increased resources in response to the needs of countries in special development situations. Noting that more work was required to clarify roles within the United Nations system with respect to IDPs, the Chairman of IATF observed the positive direction being taken by UNDP in attempting to provide greater clarity for its own role in that regard.

101. Numerous delegations commented on the structure and contents of the reports of UNDP and UNFPA. Several delegations pointed out that the present session should not be devoted to a discussion of the substance of the reports, which would really be done in the Economic and Social Council, but should instead identify specific issues for consideration and recommendations by the Council. Specific comments were presented according to the four major areas of the reports.

102. Format issues. Many delegations welcomed the reports as a clear improvement over previous reports and commended the common format, which facilitated comparisons. A few delegations would have preferred a common report. Some delegations commented that the reports could have proposed options for recommendations to the Economic and Social Council, based on a more thorough analysis of problems than contained in the present reports. Paragraphs 2 to 5 of document DP/FPA/1996/17 (Part II) were mentioned as a good example of how issues should be discussed in future reports.

103. Follow-up to the triennial policy review. Speaking on the resident coordinator system, several delegations commended UNDP efforts so far on expanding the pool of recruitment but urged that those efforts be intensified. One delegation requested UNFPA to inform the Executive Board about the results of discussions at the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) High-Level Meeting on experiences with the resident coordinator system. It was noted that the system seemed to be functioning more effectively during crisis situations and the factors influencing that should be examined. UNFPA was requested to clarify the future role of the newly designated UNFPA representatives in the context of the resident coordinator system.

104. Follow-up to major conferences. Delegations requested clarification on concrete outputs achieved so far, especially at the field-level, with regard to enhanced coordination and the utilization of guidelines, such as those issued by the inter-agency task force of the International Conference on Population and Development implementation. In that context, there were also questions about the inputs of UNDP and UNFPA to upcoming conferences, namely Habitat II and the World Food Summit. One delegation expressed

concern about the absence of population issues in the documents of the United Nations Special Initiative on Africa and requested an update on the integration of population and reproductive health components into the Initiative. Both organizations were asked to inform the Executive Board of their strategies for increased resource mobilization to address the many new concerns that had emerged in the international development field.

105. Several delegations expressed concern at the limited number of country strategy notes (CSNs) that had actually been completed and asked about the reasons for the slow progress. Another delegation expressed concern that the programme approach, although a good concept, had achieved limited progress. Regarding national execution, one delegation requested clarification on the role of national implementation units and their implications for national capacity-building, which some delegations pointed out was fundamental for successful national execution. Emphasis should also be given to increased training of government staff and project personnel in order to enhance national capacity. One delegation questioned UNFPA on how the Fund's revision of guidelines on national execution was being coordinated with efforts of UNDP in that area. A few delegations requested more figures and information on decentralization in UNDP. While one delegation emphasized the need for further cooperation with regional economic commissions, another cautioned on the establishment of strengthened mechanisms while the role of the commissions was under review. Regarding common premises, many delegations expressed satisfaction with progress achieved and planned. One delegation suggested that the reports should have provided more information about common administrative services. Such services needed to be expanded faster and should include more than information networks.

106. Collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions. Several delegations stressed the importance of closer collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions, but encouraged the organizations to inform the Board of any problems in that regard which could be addressed through the intergovernmental process. One delegation requested information on UNFPA input into the policy framework papers of the World Bank and about the Fund's collaboration with the regional development banks. Information was also requested about the absence of any formal agreements on cooperation between UNFPA and the World Bank. Another delegation inquired as to how the Bretton Woods institutions could be involved in the CSN process.

107. Monitoring and evaluation. One delegation noted that the reports should have provided more information about the impact of evaluations on policy adjustments of the organizations. Further information was requested on recent developments in evaluation in UNDP, particularly in light of the discussions held at the second regular session 1996. With regard to strengthening national capacity for the coordination of international assistance, one delegation asked for clarification from UNFPA on the continued relevance of national population councils or units.

108. Humanitarian activities. Numerous delegations expressed appreciation for the issues raised by the report and by the Chairman of IATF. They stressed the importance of defining the role of UNDP in the overall humanitarian context, specifying that the role of UNDP was not in relief

but in development. Noting that situations and requirements varied by country, further clarification was also required regarding the role of UNDP in such areas as IDPs, demobilization and de-mining. With the current focus on complex emergencies, it was stressed that UNDP should not neglect natural disasters, where the role of the resident coordinator had been important and inter-agency collaboration had often been exemplary. A number of delegations also pointed out the importance of ensuring that practical measures were being taken to ensure collaboration with DHA and with Bretton Woods institutions, especially the World Bank. Many delegations wished to have an opportunity to discuss the matters in more depth and noted that they would return to the subject in the UNDP segment under the discussions of TRAC 3.

109. Replies. The Associate Administrator addressed the specific questions and comments of delegations. He recognized that the report provided comprehensive information but could have had additional analysis to guide the discussions of the Executive Board and the Economic and Social Council.

110. The recruitment of resident coordinators was being opened up to include the large agencies in addition to those of the JCGP. Progressively, as resident coordinators were dedicating more time to coordination activities, they were delegating UNDP representational and operational functions to deputy resident representatives. This delegation was further facilitating the clear separation of resident coordinator functions from UNDP representative and operational functions.

111. Regarding the programme approach, which was progressing steadily, it was necessary to await the outcomes of country programme mid-term reviews and final evaluations, which was where progress would be reflected.

112. The CSN was the product of a Government-owned process and the time taken for its completion depended on the national planning cycle and on the quantity and diversity of inputs required. While only nine CSNs had been completed, the CSNs were in advanced stages of completion or approval in another 34 countries. The CSN process had been initiated and was in earlier stages in another 43 countries. The CSN process was thus active in a total of 86 countries, showing steady progress in fact.

113. Regarding capacity-building for national execution, the training at the country level included government counterparts involved in national execution. The UNDP mission statement would certainly stress capacity-building as part of the enabling environment for sustainable human development. National implementation units were necessary at the present time to ensure compliance with reporting requirements for national execution.

114. The Associate Administrator provided further data on gender balance in UNDP. Currently, 32 per cent of Professionals were women. The overall targets were for 38 per cent in 1997 and 50 per cent by the year 2000. Specific gender targets for 1997 were for women to represent 20 per cent of staff at the D-2 level, 20 per cent of staff at the D-1 level and for 30 out of 132 resident representatives to be women.

Levels attained in 1996 showed that: 20 per cent of staff at the D-2 level and 13 per cent at the D-1 level were women. Of 132 resident representatives in 1996, there were 25 women.

115. With regard to collaboration with the World Bank, a joint letter had been sent by the Administrator and the President of the Bank to resident representatives on means to enhance country-level cooperation. The International Monetary Fund was also interested in developing closer collaboration with UNDP at the country level. Resources mobilization at the country level was an important operational concern of UNDP.

116. With respect to evaluation, in his introductory statement to the Economic and Social Council, the Administrator could include additional information on that subject, particularly in light of the discussions held at the second regular session 1996.

117. The Associate Administrator clarified that conference follow-up was taking place at the global level in the three inter-agency task forces (IATFs) and the newly approved committee on the empowerment and advancement of women and at the national level through the thematic groups under the leadership of resident coordinators. The IATFs were in the process of producing concrete outputs such as guidelines for resident coordinators. The thematic groups at the national level would lead eventually to coordinated or joint operational activities in support of conference outcomes.

118. Inter-agency follow-up to Habitat II was expected to be undertaken within the existing IATFs, whose work programme could be adjusted to accommodate the conference outcomes. UNDP was actively involved in preparations for the conference and had seconded two staff members to its secretariat. The Secretary General had pointed out at the ACC that as a United Nations System conference, the World Food Summit should receive support from the whole system in preparation and follow-up. The Administrator had co-signed, with other JCGP executive heads, a statement on world food security to the Bureau of the Inter-sessional Working Group of the Committee on World Food Security, which was preparing the World Food Summit.

119. With regard to decentralization, resident representatives could currently approve up to $1 million for single projects or programmes. Under the successor programming arrangements, decentralization with accountability would be enhanced, as subsequent discussions at the Executive Board would reveal. There were nine centres of experimentation where additional decentralization was being tried out prior to its eventual mainstreaming.

120. Finally, regarding humanitarian activities, the Associate Administrator pointed out the close relationship existing between UNDP and DHA, both multilaterally through the IASC as well as bilaterally through joint working groups. Collaborative work was also being undertaken with the World Bank in joint preparations for post-conflict recovery in Liberia. The Associate Administrator also confirmed that the focus of UNDP programme activity was on emergency

and crisis prevention, appropriate development assistance during crisis and on recovery, not on relief. He cited the examples of UNDP assistance in area development programmes reintegrating displaced persons: in Bosnia and Herzogovina, Cambodia, Central America, Mozambique and Ukraine, among others. He noted that the Administrator had assigned high priority to the question of coordination of resource mobilization for relief with mobilization for development. In that respect, the work of CCPOQ was important in bringing together the development agencies and the World Bank while the IASC represented primarily the relief partners. The open exchange of information between those two groups was seen as contributing to the joint examination of roles and resource mobilization, distinguishing between the various fund-raising mechanisms and the important role of the resident coordinator in mobilizing resources at the country level.

121. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) thanked delegations for the critical but constructive comments made during the discussion. He informed the Executive Board about the discussion of the resident coordinator system at the recent JCGP High-level Meeting, based on comments provided by the JCGP partner organizations to the Administrator. It was agreed that UNDP would undertake an analysis of the consolidated comments and would circulate the results and follow-up actions. In future, the agencies would also be involved in the performance evaluations of the resident coordinators. In that context, he also confirmed that the newly designated UNFPA representatives would operate within the resident coordinator system, which UNFPA continued to support fully.

122. With regard to questions about the effectiveness of the programme approach, he explained that UNFPA experiences with the approach, which had been employed since 1977 through the formulation of country programmes, had been satisfactory and had facilitated the coherent utilization of programme funds. Regarding UNFPA work on revised guidelines on national execution, he stressed that UNFPA saw it as a system-wide effort that proceeded in close consultation with UNDP. The revised guidelines would be shared with the Fund's partners in CCPOQ and JCGP for comments. UNFPA would also continue its efforts to enhance national capacity-building in all UNFPA-funded programme activities, including country-level training.

123. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) expressed his agreement with concerns that field-level follow-up to the major international conferences and summits required increased efforts. He mentioned that feedback from UNFPA offices indicated that the guidelines for the resident coordinator system on the implementation of the ICPD were being used through the work of theme groups under the guidance of the resident coordinator in many countries. UNFPA was awaiting further comments from its country offices to monitor the use of the guidelines over time. In response to a query about the CSN, he confirmed that it was the process for creating a common development vision and that JCGP was not instituting any parallel mechanisms through the common country assessment.

124. Concerning the relevance of national population councils or units, UNFPA had undertaken evaluations of such coordinating mechanisms and, with

few country-specific exceptions, had found them useful in the formulation of population policies and the coordination of external assistance. The main challenge ahead was for such institutions to extend their work beyond the traditional population sector in follow-up to the ICPD Programme of Action. On resource mobilization, he agreed on the need for intensified fund-raising efforts. He stated that the selection of advocacy as one of the core post-ICPD programme areas for UNFPA had increased activities to raise awareness at the field level.

125. Regarding inputs to the upcoming Habitat II and the World Food Summit, he explained that UNFPA had seconded a technical officer to assist in preparations for Habitat II and had actively participated in all preparatory meetings. For the World Food Summit, the executive heads of the JCGP partner organizations had issued a joint statement to highlight issues related to food security, which should receive further attention in the draft plan of action, such as food access issues, reproductive health and women's empowerment. With regard to the United Nations Special Initiative on Africa, he stated that UNFPA had raised the absence of population issues from the documents at the recent meeting of the Steering Committee on the Special Initiative. After discussions, the Steering Committee had decided to integrate gender and population as cross-cutting themes in the implementation plans and to include reproductive health specifically as a component of health-sector reform. The new understanding had been affirmed by ACC at its meeting in April.

126. Concerning collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions, the UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) responded that UNFPA had concluded an agreement with the World Bank that information gathered in preparation for country programmes would be shared between the organizations in order to avoid any duplication of work and provide a common basis for country-level activities. In addition, joint projects were being implemented in many countries. He emphasized that despite the absence of formal agreements, meaningful consultations were regularly held at all levels of the two organizations. He confirmed that UNFPA had been working closely for two decades with the Asian Development Bank and had also concluded an agreement with the African Development Bank.

127. The Executive Board took note of the reports. At the suggestion of one delegation, it was agreed that the present reports would be transmitted to the Economic and Social Council with, as annexes: (a) the extract of the report on the annual session of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board dealing with the joint UNDP/UNFPA segment; (b) the extract of the report on the annual session of the Board dealing with the implementation of programming arrangements; and (c) the extract of the report on the second regular session 1996 of the Board dealing with evaluation.

VI. HARMONIZATION OF PRESENTATION OF BUDGETS AND ACCOUNTS

128. The Director for Finance, Personnel and Administration of UNFPA, speaking on behalf of both UNDP and UNFPA, reported on the progress being made by UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF to harmonize their budget presentations. She reminded delegations of the understanding that had been widely supported at the second regular session of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board, which acknowledged that, as a way of promoting understanding and better decision-making, the harmonization of budgets meant making them more similar in content and presentation and in the underlying principles employed in the preparation of accounts and budgets. She pointed out that similarity did not mean sameness.

129. The Director reported that work on that basis was proceeding. She said that the current areas of focus were: assessing the applicability to UNDP and UNFPA of the recently adopted integrated budget approach of UNICEF; defining the delineation between programme activities, programme support and administrative costs; reconciling styles of presentation, specifically concerning those for resource utilization; harmonizing budgetary classifications; and adopting a common terminology.

130. The Director asked the Executive Board to endorse the timetable for carrying out the work that had recently been approved by the UNICEF Executive Board in its decision 1996/16. That timetable foresaw presenting a joint report to the Economic and Social Council at its forthcoming session in summer 1996; an oral progress report, along with working papers, at the third regular session 1996 of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board; and initial proposals on harmonization to the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board at its first regular session 1997, after having passed the proposals through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ).

131. The oral progress report made to the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board at the third regular session 1996 would include a comparison of budget presentations and of definitions of terms as well as steps needed for further harmonization. The eventual proposals would take account of the discussions held in the UNDP/UNFPA and UNICEF Executive Boards. The aim would be to use the harmonization proposals, once agreed to by the Executive Board, for the presentation of the biennial budgets for 1998-1999, as far as possible. The Director also advised the Board that during the discussion on budget harmonization at the UNICEF Executive Board it had been agreed to have an intersessional briefing on the subject.

132. The delegations who spoke following the Director's statement stressed the great importance they all placed on the harmonization of the budgets of the three organizations. Several of them mentioned that they understood how difficult that harmonization was; however, some felt that the work was not proceeding as rapidly as they had hoped. One delegation expressed the position of its Government, which was that if harmonization was not achieved, it would adversely affect its support to the organizations involved. Some delegations wondered whether the timetable proposed was

realistic, given the complexities of the situation. One delegation, noting that the agenda of the ACABQ was already set, asked if it was feasible to submit the proposals through ACABQ.

133. In her reply, the Director said that UNDP and UNFPA had made it a point to keep the Executive Board informed of the progress that was being made on budget harmonization. A progress report, with working papers, had been presented to the Executive Board at its second regular session 1996 six weeks earlier, in March 1996. The working group on harmonization set up by the three organizations was now focusing on having its initial proposals ready for submission to the Board at its first regular session in 1997, after submission to ACABQ.

134. Seconded by the Associate Administrator of UNDP, the Director pointed out that one of the difficulties encountered had been that UNICEF had just recently adopted its own new integrated budget presentation, covering only the headquarters and regional office budgets, not the country offices. That had inevitably slowed down the process. However, both UNDP and UNFPA felt strongly that the proposed timetable should be adhered to if harmonized budget presentations were to be presented for 1998-1999. Moreover, in the interest of harmonization, all three organizations should be working on the same schedule. The Director reiterated that harmonization did not require exactly the same presentations. But it did mean that the budgets would be similar, comparable and transparent, as pointed out by delegations during discussions at the annual session as well as at the second regular session 1996. That was a goal to which all three organizations were sincerely committed, and the proposed timetable would allow them to reach that goal.

135. Several delegations acknowledged the difficulties created by the new integrated budget for UNICEF. Two delegations expressed the view that that new budget was, in and of itself, an improvement in that organization's budget presentation. However, some delegations stressed that they did not want further difficulties to delay the progress and results they all felt were essential. On that understanding, it would be possible to endorse the proposed timetable as requested.

136. The Executive Board, therefore, noted with appreciation the commitment expressed by both UNDP and UNFPA to achieve harmonized budgetary procedures and stressed the importance of putting the new procedures in place so they would take effect starting with the budgets for the biennium 1998-1999. The Board further emphasized the importance of making the procedures, which would apply to UNICEF as well, go as far towards harmonization, transparency and comparability as possible. The Board endorsed the timetable presented by the Director on behalf of both UNDP and UNFPA as contained in paragraph three above and already endorsed by the Executive Board of UNICEF.

137. The Executive Board took note of the oral progress report of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund on the harmonization of presentation of budgets and accounts, with the comments made thereon.

UNDP SEGMENT

VII. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR AND RELATED MATTERS

A. Annual report

138. The Administrator introduced his annual report for 1995 (DP/1996/18 and Add. 1-4). His presentation was divided into three parts: (a) steps taken to create an enabling environment within UNDP to promote and implement the initiatives for change, adopted by the Executive Board in decision 94/14, including information on programme focus, resource mobilization, management, human resources, and system-wide coordination; (b) programme results, including the reorientation of programmes, financial status of the programme and resource planning for the next period; and (c) future challenges.

139. Within the scope of the last item, the Administrator informed the Executive Board that UNDP planned to intensify its efforts to transform itself. New mechanisms had been instituted, such as the Executive Committee and a committee on the management of change. UNDP senior managers had also decided to launch Project UNDP 2001, an instrument that would focus on systemic issues that impeded the overall reform programme. However, core resources had declined in 1995 and he was now calling on the Board to form a strategic partnership with UNDP in order to achieve the $1.1 billion annual funding target. He stated that UNDP looked forward to future discussions on the recent Assessment of UNDP, sponsored by the Governments of Denmark, India, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, of which an executive summary was available to the Board. The 1996-1997 UNDP Plan and additional background information were made available to the Board. The Administrator also introduced the revised UNDP draft mission statement, which was before the Board for approval.

140. Forty-five delegations took the floor to speak on the item, thanking the Administrator for his statement and the additional documentation provided for the meeting. Most speakers said they had found the statement comprehensive and enlightening and commended the Administrator and his colleagues on their efforts to create an enabling environment for change in UNDP.

Programme focus

141. In their comments on the annual report of the Administrator, delegations in general said that the documentation contained useful information on the work of UNDP under the five operational objectives of the 1995 UNDP Plan. They noted with appreciation the progress made by UNDP in implementing the initiatives for change and in giving substance to the four areas of focus at the programme level. Virtually all delegations reaffirmed their support for the focus areas and attached particular importance to the priority being given to the thematic area of poverty

eradication and the functional area of capacity development within the framework of sustainable human development. One observer delegation commented that the attention of UNDP to the subject of governance should not be to the detriment of UNDP focus areas, in particular poverty eradication. The importance of developing quantitative goals for achieving poverty eradication was mentioned. Many stated that UNDP needed to concentrate its scarce resources further in areas where it had a comparative advantage and supported the efforts it was making to define "the focus within the focus". In that respect, the informal consultations with Board members initiated by the Bureau for Programme Policy and Support were proving to be useful.

142. Many delegations provided illustrations of the work being done by their countries in the framework of sustainable human development (SHD) and with UNDP support. One delegation was critical of the fact that, so far, gender-specific issues represented only a small fraction of UNDP expenditures on SHD areas and called for early action to develop a greater number of gender-specific programmes. Another delegation was concerned that, in building its substantive capabilities, UNDP might duplicate the research and technical capabilities that existed in other institutions. Food security, forestry and development policy research, for example, were subjects covered by other agencies.

Documentation

143. Many speakers remarked that while the documentation was comprehensive and complied with various reporting requirements, it was difficult to derive from it an overall picture of the focus of UNDP work. Several stated that the report should be more analytic and problem-oriented. One delegation felt the report should consist essentially of brief analyses of statistical data on programme trends at the country level, particularly as they related to Executive Board decisions. Another speaker suggested it should also focus on lessons learned and impact assessment while a third suggested the inclusion of a comparative advantage analysis of results against targets.

144. One delegation suggested that the 1996-1997 UNDP Plan might provide a good framework for monitoring and reporting on organizational activities since it defined specific objectives, key results areas and performance indicators. One observer delegation stated that it was necessary to have time to analyse the documents that were circulated in the room and that it would comment on them in the future. Another delegation pointed out that his delegation had previously proposed an alternative format for the annual report.

Resources

145. Most delegations commented on the decline in core resources in real terms during 1995 and called for greater efforts to make UNDP more attractive to donors. Some speakers observed that, while the reform process under the initiatives for change had intensified, the core funds to

translate those reforms into high-impact programmes were diminishing. A number of delegations expressed their concern that UNDP might come to rely too much on non-core resources that did not provide an appropriate basis for the operations of a multilateral agency. In that context, several commented on the number of trust funds established during 1995 and enquired about the administrative costs, management implications and overall cost-effectiveness of such arrangements. One delegation enquired whether UNDP had developed a core funding strategy comparable to the non-core strategy mentioned in document DP/1996/18. He also raised the issue of burden-sharing. Several delegations confirmed that they would maintain their core contributions for 1996 at 1995 levels. One speaker called for the establishment of a special task force under the Administrator to deal with the question of core resource mobilization.

146. Several delegations from the African regional group reflected their concern that declining UNDP resources could negatively affect programmes in their region, given the difficulty seen in attracting other sources of financing. Several other speakers requested that UNDP activities with relation to economies in transition be more intensive and predictable.

147. It was suggested by one delegation that, in order to leverage its modest funds, UNDP should engage more aggressively in co-financing large programmes with the multilateral financial institutions, in particular components relating to capacity development and other SHD areas. A few delegations said they looked forward to receiving at the September 1996 session of the Executive Board the findings of the evaluation of co-financing that UNDP had recently commissioned. One delegation, supported by another, requested the Administrator, in accordance with decision 95/28, to provide information on the impact of the quality of programme activities of UNDP, the relationship between core and non-core resources, and review the costs, including staff costs, involved in providing operational and administrative support to non-core activities. One observer delegation stressed the excellent performance of the Latin American region in co-financing.

148. One observer delegation stated that in the allocation of resources, new categories of countries should not be introduced since there was no legal basis for a possible reclassification.

Strengthening country offices

149. Many speakers stressed that it was essential to continue improving the services and support provided to country offices by UNDP headquarters. In that respect, the further restructuring of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS), the provision of timely and technically sound guidance to country offices, efficient programming procedures and the elimination of micro-management and unnecessary requests for information by headquarters should be achieved rapidly. It was generally felt that empowering country offices by connecting them with appropriate human and technical resources, training opportunities, information and technical expertise was the key to improved performance at the country level.

150. One delegation urged that similar attention be given to strengthening UNDP focal points in programme countries without a UNDP country office. Others requested more flexibility for country offices in applying the SHD programming framework to national circumstances and conditions.

Coordination

151. Many speakers commented on the efforts of UNDP to support enhanced coordination in the operational activities of the United Nations system within the framework of the triennial policy review of operational activities for development and by improving its support to the resident coordinator system. It was agreed that establishing policy and operational complementarity between UNDP and the funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system was to be a desirable, if ambitious goal. Coordination with the multilateral financial institutions was also important. Referring to emergency situations, several speakers observed that the clear definition and effective discharge of the role of UNDP, on the one hand, and those of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) and the relief agencies on the other, should be pursued. In that respect, the intention of UNDP to collaborate with DHA within the framework of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee for the follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution 96/56 was welcomed by one delegation. The informative remarks of the Administrator in his opening statement concerning the development aspects of the role of UNDP in emergencies were appreciated by a number of speakers.

152. Some delegations, however, considered it essential to determine whether the resident coordinator system was functioning effectively; what the obstacles to better performance were; and how best to involve resident coordinators themselves more fully in efforts to enhance the system. One delegation enquired when the evaluation of UNDP support to the resident coordinator system would be available. One or two speakers said they hoped that efforts to promote policy coherence at United Nations headquarters would not divert attention from programme matters at the country level. One delegation enquired whether the Administrator had experienced any difficulty in combining his role as head of UNDP with the coordination responsibilities entrusted to him by the Secretary-General. Others stated that coordination was ultimately the responsibility of recipient Governments and that UNDP should focus on strengthening national coordination capacity.

153. One delegation referred to the importance of the country strategy note and urged UNDP to persuade more countries to adopt that coordination tool. A number of speakers commended UNDP on the role it played in promoting national reconciliation and reconstruction in countries in crisis. Others expressed their support for the work of UNDP in promoting the harmonization of programme and budget matters in the Joint Consultative Group on Policy.

Accountability

154. Delegations emphasized the importance of sustaining ongoing efforts to strengthen managerial, financial, individual and substantive

accountability in UNDP and said the organization had made important strides in that area. The improved audit compliance rate cited in document DP/1996/18 was commendable, as were recent measures to enhance individual accountability. On the other hand, one or two delegations observed in respect of evaluation that the relevant section of the latter report had evidently been prepared before the second regular session 1996 of the Executive Board since it did not reflect issues of compliance and impact assessment discussed at that meeting. One delegation requested that the programme impact and performance assessment exercise undertaken by UNDP be tested in more countries.

155. A few delegations had questions about how audits were conducted in UNDP and how their findings could be made available to the Executive Board. One speaker sought clarification of the need for the special audits mentioned in document DP/1996/18.

156. In a proposal read on behalf of eleven other delegations, one speaker stated that, against a background of resource constraints and in order to maximize resources available for programming, the Executive Board should use the annual examination of the budget to assess carefully the scope for further savings. A precondition for that assessment would be to receive precise information pertaining to cost segments at headquarters in New York including, inter alia, staff, rent and other relevant expenses. He requested that such information be made available in a transparent, user-friendly and timely manner in order to facilitate further discussion at the third regular session 1996 of the Board. Offering support for that proposal, another delegation, however, stressed the need to maintain a strong management structure at UNDP headquarters.

Management of change

157. Delegations noted with interest the new measures and mechanisms announced by the Administrator for intensifying change in UNDP. Several remarked that accelerating the reform process while ensuring that day-to-day operations remained intact, was desirable. Some delegations requested further information about the role of the process consultants contracted by UNDP to assist in the management of change. One speaker expressed the view that the change process should continue to be conducted transparently, as had so far been the case.

United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa

158. Speaking for the African Group, one delegation welcomed the elaboration of the role of UNDP in the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa. He also noted the success of round-table meetings for several African countries during 1995 and expressed the hope that commitments would lead to disbursements. Referring to the Special Initiative, another speaker enquired about the extent of consultations with Governments prior to its launch and whether resources for its implementation were assured. The Assistant Administrator and Director, Regional Bureau for Africa, responded to those other questions about the Special Initiative in a separate presentation.

Other matters

159. A number of delegations reaffirmed the importance they attached to technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) and offered illustrations of the role their countries played in that respect. The omission of references to TCDC in document DP/1996/18 was regretted. Several speakers also mentioned the importance of national execution in their countries and one requested that consideration be given to promoting exchanges of experience among national execution units in different countries. One speaker requested that UNDP report to the first regular session 1996 on information-sharing among regions.

160. Other issues raised by delegations related to the gender balance of Professional staff in UNDP; the use by UNDP of information available from United Nations research bodies; and the interest in receiving pertinent publications prior to their being received by the media. One delegation noted that some recent reports of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) had contained information relevant to UNDP, and asked what form of cooperation existed between the Office for Evaluation and Strategic Planning and JIU.

161. One delegation requested that UNDP open an office in his country.

Responses by the Administrator

162. The Administrator provided answers to questions and further information at various intervals during the debate. On the question of resources, he reiterated that UNDP considered core funds to be the bedrock of its operations. He clarified that UNDP had always had a strategy for mobilizing core resources. The reason for mentioning the non-core funding strategy in document DP/1996/18 was that it was a new initiative developed in 1995. Concerning the proliferation of trust funds, he stated that UNDP was keeping the matter under review and was also encouraging third-party cost-sharing as a complement to trust funds. Regarding more aggressive approaches to major donors, experience showed that the Administrator could only go so far in that direction without alienating voluntary contributors. It was for that reason that he was now proposing to form a strategic partnership with the Executive Board for reaching the $3.3 billion target. He observed that there had been a default in the bargain struck over UNDP reform, and he sympathized with programme countries that felt they had adopted major changes seemingly to little avail.

163. On the issue of documentation, he agreed that the system of annual reporting needed to be improved. He accepted that a solution could be to merge the reporting and planning processes in UNDP. The more objective methods being developed for monitoring performance under the 1996-1997 UNDP Plan could lend themselves to the production of higher quality reports to the Executive Board.

164. In terms of achieving greater programme focus, he reminded members that he had conveyed his views on that subject in a previous address. Within the first priority area of poverty eradication, UNDP was now concentrating its support on (a) the development of national anti-poverty

policies and (b) the development of income opportunities and sustainable livelihoods for the poor. He agreed that quantitative goals for measuring poverty eradication were essential and cited a recent initiative of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/DAC) in that area as a significant step forward. As far as UNDP interest in forestry, food security and other technical areas was concerned, he clarified that there was no duplication of effort between UNDP and the technical agencies and other international organizations. UNDP did not at all seek to be a leader in such technical fields; it sought only to develop such capacity of its own as was needed to appraise with some degree of competence the programmes in those areas that it was asked to fund.

165. On coordination, he agreed that the current picture presented by the resident coordinator system was mixed and pointed out that the coordination segment of the Economic and Social Council would take up the issue. He stressed that the purpose of seeking policy coherence at the global level was precisely to strengthen country-level activities involving United Nations system partners. With respect to his role as Special Coordinator, he said he had not experienced any particular difficulty in combining the function with his duties as Administrator. Since UNDP was pivotal to the coordination of United Nations development activities, the two functions went together quite naturally.

166. On other matters, the Administrator provided clarifications concerning UNDP staff costs in relation to total income, the role of the Programme Management and Oversight Committee and the UNDP system of management audits. In response to a specific question about collaboration with non-governmental organizations, he stated that UNDP would both use them for direct programme implementation and would also help to build their capacities. Concerning the numbers of projects in the UNDP portfolio in 1995, he stated that until 1995, those numbers had been declining but they had risen in that year for reasons which UNDP was now trying to establish. Referring to special audits, he explained that they were audits that went beyond the inspections that UNDP carried out on a regular basis. However, he emphasized that the conduct of a special audit did not in itself imply that there were any grounds for major concern. With regard to the JIU reports, the Administrator confirmed that the recommendations were reviewed by UNDP and found to be useful.

167. Regarding gender balance in UNDP, he stated that 32 per cent of Professional staff in 1996 were women. The aim was to achieve gender equality in the next four to five years as had been noted in the discussion on agenda item 5 (see paragraph 114).

168. The Secretary, in response to a query concerning the late issuance of the statistical annex to the annual report (DP/1996//18/Add. 4), noted that the information included in the annex was obtained from non-UNDP sources, who were unable to make that information available to UNDP until after the close of their financial year. In the past, the addendum on statistical information had been available only in a provisional form at the annual session; in efforts to streamline its work, the Executive Board now submitted information for the year in question in its final form at the

earliest possible opportunity. The delay in receiving the information in UNDP for the annual session 1996 had been complicated by the early date on which the session was being held.

169. The Executive Board took note of the annual report of the Administrator for 1996 (DP/1996/18 and Add.1, 3 and 4, taking into account the views expressed by delegations during the discussion of the item as reflected in the report on the session.

B. UNDP mission statement

170. Quite a number of delegations expressed their appreciation for, and approval of, the revised mission statement proposed by UNDP. Two or three delegations said they had some continuing concerns about the wording of certain paragraphs. It was agreed to hold an informal meeting among interested delegations during the current session in order to try to resolve such remaining concerns.

171. The Administrator noted that the Executive Board had had several opportunities to review the draft statement, which was an internal document and not intended to be an official document. The text before it at the current session had been extensively revised to take into account the valuable comments of various members. The present version, as he had said in his opening address, reflected a strong consensus within the organization and was completely consistent with the legislative framework provided by the Board itself. It would in no way change the mandate and priorities of the Programme. It was important that the Executive Board approve the statement as expeditiously as possible so that it could be given to the staff of UNDP as their guide and inspiration.

172. Following the informal meeting, the revised draft of the UNDP mission statement was circulated to the Executive Board for its approval.

173. The representative of one delegation noted that although his was a Spanish-speaking delegation, he had been asked to endorse a text that had been presented in English only. It was agreed that, in view of the understanding reached during the informal consultations held earlier in the year on the mission statement and the discussions at the current session, the secretariat would consult with representatives of interested delegations in New York before the mission statement was issued in languages.

174. One delegation stated that his reservations concerning paragraph 4 had not been answered in the text, specifically the use of the term "good governance". He would have preferred that the term "transparent and accountable governance" be used instead of "good governance". Moreover, his delegation had found the time available for consultation and discussion on the item insufficient. That view was supported by one observer delegation.

175. Speaking as coordinator of the Asian group, one delegation stated that she had, indeed, hoped for more time to complete consultations in the group. Progress had been made in negotiating language that could be

broadly acceptable to all members; and she regretted therefore that more time had not been made available to satisfy the concerns of all members of the group.

176. The Vice-President, who had been chairing the meeting, stated that he had sought to expedite discussion of the item, taking into account all the views that had been expressed on the UNDP mission statement during previous sessions and informally.

177. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/29. Mission statement of the United Nations Development Programme

The Executive Board

Endorses the mission statement attached as an annex to the present decision, taking into account the discussions that took place during the annual session 1996 of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund, as reflected in the report on agenda item 7 of the session.

15 May 1996

Annex

MISSION STATEMENT

WE THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS DETERMINED
...to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the
dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of
men and women and of nations large and small,
... to promote social progress and better standards of life
in larger freedom, and for these ends
... to employ international machinery for the promotion
of the economic and social advancement of all peoples,
have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims ....

From the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations

UNDP is part of the United Nations and upholds the vision of the United Nations Charter. It is committed to the principle that development is inseparable from the quest for peace and human security and that the United Nations must be a strong force for development as well as peace.

UNDP's mission is to help countries in their efforts to achieve sustainable human development by assisting them to build their capacity to design and carry out development programmes in poverty eradication, employment creation and sustainable livelihoods, the empowerment of women and the protection and regeneration of the environment, giving first priority to poverty eradication.

UNDP also acts to help the United Nations family to become a unified and powerful force for sustainable human development and works to strengthen international cooperation for sustainable human development.

UNDP, at the request of governments and in support of its areas of focus, assists in building capacity for good governance, popular participation, private and public sector development and growth with equity, stressing that national plans and priorities constitute the only viable frame of reference for the national programming of operational activities for development within the United Nations system.

UNDP resident representatives normally serve as resident coordinators of the operational activities of the United Nations system, supporting at the request of governments the coordination of development and humanitarian assistance Resident coordinators also help to orchestrate the full intellectual and technical resources of the United Nations system in support of national development.

UNDP strives to be an effective development partner for the United Nations relief agencies, working to sustain livelihoods while they seek to sustain lives. It acts to help countries to prepare for, avoid and manage complex emergencies and disasters.

UNDP draws on expertise from around the world, including from developing countries, United Nations specialized agencies, civil society organizations and research institutes.

UNDP supports South-South cooperation by actively promoting the exchange of experience among developing countries.

UNDP supports, within its areas of focus, technology transfer, adaptation, and access to the most effective technology.

UNDP receives voluntary contributions from nearly every country in the world. **UNDP** seeks to ensure a predictable flow of resources to support its programmes. It provides grant funds through criteria based on universality that strongly favour low-income countries, particularly the least developed.

UNDP is politically neutral and its cooperation is impartial. It seeks to conduct its work in a manner transparent and accountable to all its stakeholders.

UNDP is committed to a process of continuing self-evaluation and reform. It aims to improve its own efficiency and effectiveness and to assist the United Nations system in becoming a stronger force for the benefit of the people and countries of the world.

UNDP will continue to support an international development cooperation framework that responds to changing global, regional and national circumstances.

C. United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s

178. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa introduced the report of the Administrator on the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa (UN-NADAF) in the 1990s (DP/1996/20). She outlined the main elements of UNDP support, as contained in the report, to the activities of UN-NADAF, including support to human resource development efforts, for the establishment of the African Economic Community, capacity-building and strategic planning, private sector development, the Panel of High-Level Personalities on African Development, the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries, and the follow-up to the Tokyo International Conference on African Development. UNDP had contributed its efforts to ensuring that UN-NADAF was effectively implemented and that African economic recovery and development was kept as a top priority of the United Nations. The United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa would give new impetus to UN-NADAF. Details of the role of UNDP in the Special Initiative were noted in document DP/1996/20. UNDP would help to monitor the implementation of the Special Initiative and report to the Administrative Committee on Coordination through the Administrator's role as co-chair of the Steering Group. UNDP would have primary responsibility for the segment on governance.

179. One delegation said his Government would support the Special Initiative on Africa and in that regard, sought the collaboration and guidance of resident representatives. The speaker noted that his Government could not yet announce an exact financial figure but he felt that the priorities of the Special Initiative were in line with those of his Government. His Government had already made financial contributions to trust funds set up to benefit confidence-building measures in Africa as well as the Organization of African Unity peace fund. Regional initiatives from Africa on conflict prevention and confidence-building measures would be most welcome. The speaker stated that a comprehensive approach was needed for the Special Initiative and hoped that the actions of UNDP would be coordinated with those of other organizations. His delegation was also eager to include technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) in the Special Initiative and informed the Executive Board of a regional workshop on TCDC among African and Asian countries that would be held in July 1996. He also announced that a second conference on African Development would be held in Tokyo in 1998, with a preparatory meeting to be held in 1997. A preparatory seminar for the mid-term review of UN-NADAF would take place in Tokyo in August 1996, with the participation of African and Asian countries, international financial institutions and development cooperation institutions, including UNDP.

180. While according to several delegations UN-NADAF had not shown significant results to date, many speakers thanked UNDP for its efforts to implement UN-NADAF-related activities. UNDP was asked to continue to assist United Nations bodies engaged in support to UN-NADAF. One delegation appealed to UNDP to assist in raising additional funding for his country. Two speakers emphasized the need to reduce arms flows to Africa.

181. One delegation expressed concern about the effect of reduced staff in the Regional Bureau for Africa on the ability of UNDP to carry out its commitments to UN-NADAF.

182. Several delegations underlined that the Special Initiative on Africa was not a replacement of UN-NADAF, but rather an extension of it, which required the committed action of all partners involved. The collaboration between the Bretton Woods institutions and United Nations organizations was encouraged and welcomed. The resource mobilization situation must be better clarified. Some delegations asked for more information on the role of UNDP in the Special Initiative and the potential roles of donors. Structured roles for both donors and recipients would be welcomed.

183. The representative of the Joint Inspection Unit noted the results of a recent study conducted by the Unit regarding UN-NADAF, which would be reported to the Committee on Programme Coordination. The Assistant Administrator thanked the Government of Norway for support to UNDP work in governance in Africa and expressed appreciation to the Government of Japan for its contributions to TCDC between Asia and Africa. In response to questions raised, she stated that consultations at the country level, with bilateral and multilateral aid agencies, and with the Bretton Woods institutions, would help to define better the work of the Special Initiative on Africa and determine the appropriate means to undertake resource mobilization. UNDP and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) would work together to track progress of the Special Initiative. Governance was a key initiative. She expressed support for the proposal of the Joint Inspection Unit that in order to strengthen UN-NADAF, ECA needed to have a larger role.

184. She also informed the Executive Board that private sector forums held in conjunction with round-table meetings on Angola and Namibia had been successful in attracting private investments. The format would be used in future round-table meetings, possibly with the involvement of NGOs as well.

185. With regard to the Special Initiative on Africa, she stated that it brought programme content, through measurable and identifiable outputs, to UN-NADAF. The aims of the Special Initiative were consistent with the priorities of Africa and were linked with sustainable human development.

186. The Executive Board took note of the report of the Administrator on the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (DP/1996/20).

VIII. MATTERS RELATING TO THE PROGRAMMING CYCLES

A. Implementation of the successor programming arrangements

187. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS) introduced the note by the Administrator on the implementation of the successor programming arrangements (DP/1996/21), which explained how Executive Board decision 95/23 was being put into operation. He expressed great satisfaction about the very constructive dialogue enjoyed so far with Executive Board members in relation to the item.

188. In his statement, the Assistant Administrator outlined some of the main areas where new arrangements represented changes with the past: the system offered more flexibility, more emphasis on programme quality; it was performance-based and gave more authority to the country level. Rules on national execution, programme approach and co-financing were being revised in the context of developing the new programming arrangements. Other steps taken by UNDP were: provision of technical guidance to country offices on key substantive areas; reinforcing of collaboration with specialized agencies; and piloting of resource networks on sustainable human development thematic areas. A revised format for reporting to the Executive Board on the review of country activities would provide details of specific programme activities and analysis of the overall impact of UNDP intervention on development in the respective countries.

189. The Assistant Administrator gave specific comments on three of the categories for resource allocation: regional programmes, countries in special development situations, and resources for support to resident coordinators.

190. The Manual for the programming of UNDP resources (Part II) was distributed to the Executive Board.

Debate

191. In the debate that followed, many speakers commended the statement by the Assistant Administrator for clarifying questions raised earlier. The need for effective and efficient management of development funds was underlined. One speaker called for all donors to increase substantively their official development assistance in the future. Resources managed by UNDP must be used as a catalyst that would encourage multilateral and bilateral donors to contribute to UNDP programmes and projects. In that light, the guidelines should include more information about the strategy and concrete measures that UNDP would undertake in country programming.

Country-level programming (lines 1.1.1 and 1.1.2)

192. Many delegations emphasized the central role of national Governments in designing and approving programmes in their countries. The updated guidelines were a positive step towards the implementation by UNDP of the successor programming arrangements and the flexibility in application to different country situations was welcomed. One delegation asked for more time to examine the guidelines before endorsing them, and suggested that the country cooperation framework (CCF) as a national plan should be better reflected in the guidelines. One observer delegation said that they noticed a growing complexity in the programming process of UNDP, characterized by the new programme documents, emerging supervisory bodies and numerous instances of evaluation in the context of decreasing allocation of resources.

193. Some speakers sought clarification about the role of the advisory note in the programming process and expressed concern about a possible diminishing of the authority of national Governments. Another speaker stated that the consultations referred to in paragraph 5 (b) of document DP/1996/21 had not been previously agreed and that the procedures stated in paragraph 5 (c), in which various organizations were invited to the local programme appraisal committees for reviewing the CCF were unacceptable. One speaker suggested that Governments could proceed with preparation of country programmes and identification of needs and priorities even before the advisory note was completed. Other delegations supported the involvement of civil society in the preparation of the advisory note and encouraged UNDP to involve those organizations as much as possible. UNDP should, however, maintain strict neutrality in the selection of the appropriate civil organizations with which to consult. The involvement of multilateral and bilateral donors in the local Programme Advisory Committee was also welcomed by some delegations while others asked for clarification of the role of the committee. One delegation stated that it would not be possible for his Government to involve other multilateral or bilateral donors in the preparation and review of the CCF. He also stressed the need for prior concurrence of Governments before constituting local programme advisory committees, which should essentially consist of UNDP and host Government officials.

194. With regard to monitoring and evaluation, one delegation emphasized the need to use results in a productive way and hoped that reports would be critical and analytical. Several delegations supported the issuance of review reports on a particular country to the Executive Board every four years rather than on a biennial basis as envisaged in the report while one delegation favoured more frequent reviews. A question was raised about whether reports should be standardized. One observer delegation stated that the monitoring of the evaluation system for allocation of additional resources was excessive and that the guidelines and procedures for the allocation of resources should be reconsidered, in order to discontinue redundant bodies and procedures.

195. One delegation questioned whether the assignment of 60 per cent of base country-level target resource allocations from core (TRAC) resources would still allow flexibility of the core fund.

Regional programming (line 1.2)

196. Some delegations asked for more clarification on the role of regional economic commissions as well as on the regional cooperation framework referred to in document DP/1996/21. The use of the word "strategy" should be avoided. It was noted that the focus of the regional programme must be sharpened to concentrate on activities that were more effectively carried out at the regional level, such as those in the environment and HIV/AIDS. One delegation asked how the regional dimension could be incorporated into country strategy notes since the notes were not universal.

Programming in countries in special development situations (line 1.1.3)

197. Delegations commented favourably on the guidelines developed for use of line 1.1.3. One delegation, on behalf of others, while welcoming the initiative to elaborate the guidelines, said it would be useful if UNDP could clarify further the scope of the new arrangements and the emphasis placed on prevention and rehabilitation versus relief activities. The delegation cited the importance attached to the follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/56 on the coordination of humanitarian assistance, and asked UNDP to discuss the new proposed guidelines with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), created by the resolution, in particular the proposal to develop common strategic frameworks to guide resource allocation. UNDP should then report to the Executive Board on the outcome of the discussions in the context of the follow-up to the Council resolution. In particular, the proposal on resource allocation would need to be clarified as it related to existing funding mechanisms, including the Consolidated Appeals Process. It was also suggested that the proposal by UNDP to strengthen the coordination function in response to sudden crises be discussed among agencies. Elaboration of the comparative advantage of UNDP and suggestions and options on its specific role and operational responsibilities in emergencies would be welcomed. Some delegations underlined the need for UNDP to concentrate on its development dimension in emergency situations. That meant focusing on prevention and disaster preparedness as a regular part of the development agenda and enhancing stabilization and sustainability in the post-emergency situation. The response of UNDP in emergencies was part of a wider framework of an integrated approach to crisis management. Through its central role in development and the resident coordinator system, UNDP had a key role to play in bringing different actors together. In the disbursements of funds under line 1.1.3, UNDP would need to look into the role of different actors, including itself, and assess which had the best capacity to implement the activities needed.

198. The use of experience and lessons learned in developing the guidelines was welcomed. UNDP was encouraged to work closely with other relevant actors, such as the World Bank on post-emergency rehabilitation or with UNHCR in contingency planning in response to pending crisis situations. The resident representative played an important role in coordinating the United Nations system response through the United Nations

Disaster Management Team. The authority to allocate up to $200,000 to support rapid emergency response activities by the resident coordinator was supported.

199. The Director of the Geneva Office, Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), on behalf of the Under-Secretary General of DHA, welcomed the initiative of UNDP in providing for the needs of countries in special development situations as described in document DP/1996/21. That was an important and necessary initiative based on experience and recognized that attention needed to be paid to rehabilitation and development during periods of humanitarian crisis. He stated that the Under-Secretary General of DHA also served as the Emergency Relief Coordinator, assisted by the Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC) and noted that IASC was not mentioned in the guidelines. In referring to paragraph 9(a), he mentioned that it was his assumption that strategic frameworks would cover both relief and recovery programmes. In that regard, he proposed that the initiative of the strategic framework be discussed with IASC members to ensure proper definition in the roles and responsibilities of humanitarian and development partners. It was also important to ensure the useful and necessary distinction between relief and development activities in order that the various resource mobilization mechanisms were used in the most appropriate and effective way. He further underlined the need for all relevant parties to be clear about their responsibilities and the lines of accountability for those actions.

Global, interregional and special activities (line 1.3)

200. Questions were raised about the contents of the global programme. One delegation referred to the combat against the use of illicit drugs as a possible area to be covered by the global programmes.

Support to the resident coordinator (line 3.1)

201. A query was raised regarding the financing of public information activities at the country level within the context of the resident coordinator system One delegation announced a contribution of 3 million Swiss francs in support of the resident coordinator function.

Responses by the Secretariat

202. The Assistant Administrator welcomed the suggestions for improvements in the guidelines for the implementation of the new programming arrangements and responded to the questions raised by delegations. He underlined the importance of UNDP support to priority areas where the organization had a comparative advantage. UNDP was open to the idea of reporting every four years on country reviews. He underlined the fact that the dialogue envisaged in connection with preparations of the advisory

notes as well as with the local programme appraisal committees would be undertaken with the full knowledge of national authorities. The note, a UNDP internal document, played a very important role in the programming process in ensuring that consistency was maintained within the organization and that experience gained as well as expertise available within the organization was made full use of. The note did not therefore attempt to dilute the importance of the CCF and national ownership. It was clarified that the guidelines did not require the approval of the Executive Board as they formed part of UNDP internal procedures. However, as a "living document", the guidelines would be refined over time and thus the comments on the guidelines by the Board were of great value.

203. With regard to regional economic commissions, he stated that they had a mandate to provide advisory services to members of the region. Regular and specially recruited advisers worked only on the request of a programme country. A constructive dialogue with regional commissions and their important role in that area was sought. The regional framework approach was a useful tool in relation to certain sectoral issues but would not represent a regional strategy for development. The regional bureaux in UNDP would focus on draft programme proposals and then discuss them with partners in the region. With reference to the global programme, UNDP planned to submit a framework to the Executive Board for approval at its third regular session 1996. The problem of illicit drugs would be considered in the preparations for the global framework.

204. The Director of the Emergency Response Division of the Office for United Nations Support and Services emphasized the development role of UNDP, underlining that it was not a relief organization. Further, the primary UNDP role in coordination was to contribute to the formulation of a holistic approach to the requirements of countries facing crisis and to ensure that development needs were addressed as an integrated response. He referred to the discussions held with resident coordinators, DHA, United Nations agencies and NGOs in formulating the guidelines and confirmed the commitment of UNDP to further discussions and clarifications within IASC, particularly on those aspects pertaining to coordination and the development of a strategic framework, including its relationship to existing funding mechanisms. He noted that while the guidelines did not mention the IASC specifically, they did refer to the close involvement of the United Nations Disaster Management Team (DMT) and the United Nations Country Team, which served as the operational extension of IASC at the country level. In response to a question regarding the role of UNDP in the restoration of essential infrastructure, he stated that UNDP did not intend to duplicate the role of the international financial institutions and did not forsee using core resources to provide capital assistance for reconstruction. Rather, UNDP would focus primarily on the provision of assessment and pre-investment studies. In assisting to provide related rehabilitation activities with co-financed resources, UNDP would maintain its established role in undertaking small-scale projects to re-establish basic infrastructure to support transport of goods as well as water, sanitation and electricity services; primarily to facilitate the resettlement of uprooted populations and the support of productive economic activity.

Conclusion

205. The Administrator thanked the Executive Board for its comments and gave assurance that UNDP would collaborate with its partners, particularly concerning line 1.1.3. Clear lines of responsibility were necessary to ensure the link between relief and development. With regard to the implementation of the programming arrangements, the line of accountability was to him and then to the Executive Board.

206. The Administrator informed the Executive Board that small inconsistencies had arisen in the application of the resource distribution methodology approved in decision 95/23. UNDP was making the necessary, albiet very minor, adjustments and charging the unallocated reserve, which had been set up for the purpose. Resource allocations to other countries remained unaffected. He also informed the Board that the distribution of regional resources (under line 1.2) to the individual regions would be based essentially on the respective percentage shares of country target for resource assignment from the core (TRAC) resources, but would also take into account the number of countries in each region since that was necessary for the viability for regional programmes.

207. The Executive Board took note of the note by the Administrator on matters relating to the programming cycles (DP/1996/21) and the comments made thereon.

B. Request from the Government of Namibia

208. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa introduced the note by the Administrator on the request from the Government of Namibia for special status equivalent to that of a least developed country (DP/1996/24 and Add.1). She noted that while the gross national product (GNP) per capita of Namibia was above the least developed country threshold, the majority of its population had an income level similar to persons living in least developed countries. Poverty was a major issue, a factor which UNDP was working to address. At the request of the Government, as elaborated in the documentation, the Executive Board was asked to extend Namibia's special status equivalent to that given to least developed countries for the next programming cycle.

209. One delegation, on behalf of many others, and supported by several others, agreed to the request of the Government of Namibia. One delegation, while applauding progress in Namibia and citing the cooperation of its Government with Namibia, stated that it did not support the request since the GNP per capita of Namibia was far above that of least developed countries and it should not continue to have a special status. However, that delegation said it would not oppose a consensus in favour of special status and did not oppose the draft decision circulated on the matter.

210. The representative of Namibia expressed appreciation for the support his Government had received in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 46/204, in which the General Assembly had requested States and organizations United Nations system and other donors agencies to give special consideration to extending to Namibia special assistance of a scope comparable to that given to a least developed country. He stated that the present request should be seen against the current socio-economic situation in Namibia, which was summarized in document DP/1996/24/Add. 1. Peace and political stability could be jeopardized in Namibia, he stated, if socio-economic constraints were not addressed.

211. The Executive Board approved the following decision:

96/30. Namibia: Special status equivalent to that given to least developed countries

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the note by the Administrator (DP/1996/24 and Add.1);

2. *Recognizes* the similarities of the economic and social development in Namibia and those of the least developed countries;

3. *Decides* to extend to Namibia for the next three years, starting 1997, special status equivalent to that given to least developed countries.

15 May 1996

IX. AGENCY SUPPORT COSTS

212. The Associate Administrator introduced the item, noting that the subject had been discussed previously at the second regular session 1996 and at informal consultations in April 1996. Following the consultations, a conference room paper (DP/1996/CRP.10 available in English, French and Spanish) had been prepared to facilitate further discussions.

213. In his summary of the discussions on agency support costs, he noted first that in its decision 95/23, the Executive Board had approved a simplified and consolidated set of three earmarkings for what could be called agency support costs, which would replace the nine separate lines of the current cycle. Second, UNDP had proposed that programme countries be provided access, at their request, to all organizations of the United Nations system that were in a position to provide support services at the policy and programme levels. Third, he wished to make clear that agency support costs represented an additionality to the country-level target for resource assignment from the core (TRAC) resources and not a burden on them. Fourth, UNDP had made a modest proposal for simplification of the system of reimbursement of administrative and operational services involved in the implementation of projects. The proposal was drawn up in response to suggestions made by UNDP country offices as well as other operational personnel that the system be simplified. As a result, UNDP had suggested a flat rate of 10 per cent as reimbursement for such services rather than a set of differential cluster rates, which had proven to be cumbersome. UNDP did not believe that the proposals would compromise the original objectives of the support cost system as explained in the conference room paper. He concluded by saying that some delegations had requested that other options be provided to ensure greater openness and flexibility in the support cost system. Those options were described in the conference room paper. He pointed out however, that a high degree of openness and flexibility already existed in the current system. Thus, for instance, implementation services under nationally executed projects could be obtained from any competent entity, including non-governmental organizations and was not limited to United Nations specialized agencies. Also, even though technical support services were obtained from the United Nations agencies, the agencies in turn outsourced such services from a variety of non-United Nations competent organizations. It was estimated that such services could amount to almost 40 per cent of the total.

214. Delegations noted the broad support for change in the support cost system. However, some cautioned that changes should not be made without examining the full picture on the functioning of the system. One delegation asked for the opinion of UNDP on whether or not the system worked and whether specialized agencies were responsive to requests for collaboration. Several interventions focused on the need to undertake revisions in the system in connection with the implementation of the successor programming arrangements.

215. One speaker queried whether the use of support costs should be limited to certain institutions and whether there was a risk that such a system made the concerned institutions less effective and efficient and

thereby increased overhead costs. To facilitate activities at the country level, several speakers recommended that a simple, open and flexible system be designed, which would encourage national execution as the first priority and increase cost-effectiveness. If an external agency was selected for support services, then the system should facilitate the selection of an appropriate institution on a competitive basis to ensure cost efficiency. The representative of one delegation, supported by others, underlined the importance of the synergy of inter-agency cooperation and the substantial technical expertise available in the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, which should not be overlooked or underutilized. He also gave a historical perspective of the support cost system, which was greatly appreciated by other delegations. Another delegation emphasized that while the need for coordination was not being called into question, technical support services should not be limited to United Nations specialized agencies.

216. Some delegations noted that a broad range of national, regional and international institutions could be used for the execution of projects, and underlined that the choice must be determined at the country level. One speaker particularly appreciated the reference to the use of research and public policy institutions in the conference room paper. Another emphasized that recipient countries should exercise increased choice in programme implementation by procuring services from various implementing agencies such as non-governmental organizations, public institutions, national entities, and United Nations agencies. When buying services from non-United Nations sectoral agencies, normal competitive tendering and purchasing should be applied.

217. There was general support for the application of a maximum 10 per cent flat rate for large agencies, since that rate reflected the average in past experience, and an average of 13 per cent for the smaller agencies. One delegation, however, questioned the use of the figure of 10 per cent, given the decrease in agency implementation and the rise in national execution of UNDP-funded projects. Several speakers supported a formula that would result in reimbursement for the actual average costs incurred if actual costs fell below 10 per cent.

218. Representatives of the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization took the floor to emphasize that considerations on the issue were more than solely financial: they encouraged the Executive Board to support further dialogue on the role of the specialized agencies in the implementation of projects at the country level. The speakers emphasized the role of the Government in the selection of expertise.

219. The Associate Administrator thanked the Executive Board for its comments on the issue. He stated that the agency support costs system was indeed working but that it could also be improved. As stated at the second regular session 1996, the agency support costs system was a partnership, with all entities part of the larger picture of the United Nations system. The overall goal was to provide recipient countries with the best assistance available to fulfil their goals. In response to a query, he

confirmed that the average reimbursement rate had been 10 per cent. UNDP agreed to the suggestion raised regarding cases where actual costs fell below 10 per cent. In response to another question, he stated that regional commissions did not receive a particular earmarking in the system and that their collaboration would depend on the decisions of national Governments in the selection of expertise for particular projects.

220. The Executive Board approved the following decision:

96/31. UNDP: Agency support costs

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the reports of the Administrator contained in documents DP/1996/13, DP/1995/49 and the additional information provided on the agency support costs;

2. Reaffirms the continued relevance and importance of the original key objectives of the agency support cost arrangements, which underline that the arrangements shall serve to:

(a) Provide incentives for national execution and ensure that agency technical support services are available to Governments, particularly for nationally executed programmes/projects;

(b) Improve the upstream technical focus of agencies and reduce their administrative and operational involvement in programme/project implementation;

(c) Assign resources that will permit programme countries to exercise increased choice in programme/project implementation;

3. Welcomes the confirmation provided by agency representatives that, following implementation of decision 91/32, agency technical support to national execution as well as the technical focus of the agencies have increased;

4. Decides that, under the successor programming arrangements, the current guidelines for support costs will continue to apply and will be adjusted only to the extent necessary to:

(a) Ensure coherence with the overall procedures, programme review, monitoring and oversight system being established for the successor programming arrangements;

(b) Reflect experience with the support costs arrangements from the fifth cycle;

(c) Accommodate the more simplified system of support costs earmarking;

5. Requests the Administrator to ensure that the agency support cost arrangements become more driven by country priorities and demands within the context of United Nations Development Programme-supported programmes;

6. Also requests the Administrator to promote the relevance of and enhance the linkage of the upstream technical support by agencies to United Nations Development Programme support for national programmes;

7. Decides that the support cost facilities will be administered directly by country offices in close collaboration and consultation with the programme countries and that the facilities should be used to encourage national execution of programmes and projects; and requests the Administrator to promote the involvement of competent and competitive national and regional institutions in support for policy and programme development and technical implementation;

8. Emphasizes the importance of the flexible and notional character of the special allocations under lines 1.6 (resources for implementation), 2.2 (United Nations system suppport for policy and programme development), 2.3 (technical support services from United Nations specialized agencies) and takes note of the inclusion of the regional commissions in the support cost arrangements;

9. Urges the Administrator to ensure that the support of the regional commissions is focused mainly on upstream work to support national and regional programme development and requests the Administrator to inform the Board of the procedures and areas of concentration for the utilization of support for policy and programme development for regional commissions when they have been finalized;

10. Decides that in order to enhance the incentive for national execution, in accordance with paragraph 22 of document DP/1996/13, any resources assigned for implementation of programmes and projects saved through national execution will become available for additional programming by the country, including the promotion of capacity-building for national execution;

11. Decides that the United Nations Development Programme, in order to simplify the system, should reimburse the cost of administrative and support services to the five large agencies (the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the Department of Development Support and Management Services) and the United Nations Office for Project Services with a maximum of 10 per cent, which experience has shown is the present average reimbursement rate for various inputs. Should the actual costs fall below 10 per cent, only the actual costs incurred will be reimbursed;

12. Also decides in the context of paragraph 10 of the present decision that the United Nations Development Programme should ensure that agencies maintain the existing cost measurement system and that

the Administrator should continue to report to the Executive Board biennially on the actual costs incurred; and provide recommendations if necessary to revise the reimbursement rate, also for individual agencies;

13. *Requests* that the United Nations Development Programme, in close collaboration with the specialized agencies, make every effort to ensure that the experience of individual countries is disseminated throughout the system and used for the benefit of the larger development community;

14. *Encourages* the specialized agencies to take all steps to enhance their cost-effectiveness and efficiency in providing administrative and support services;

15. *Requests* the Administrator to review recent experiences with the agency support cost arrangement at the country level, building on the evaluation presented on this matter in 1994 and to report thereon, describing lessons learned and proposing various alternatives, to the Executive Board at the annual meeting 1997 in the context of the review of the successor programming arrangements;

16. *Requests* the Administrator to inform the specialized agencies and regional commissions of the present decision.

15 May 1996

X. UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS

221. The Executive Coordinator introduced the report of the Administrator on United Nations Volunteers (UNV) (DP/1996/22). She cited the sharper focus on UNV work in poverty eradication and the evolution of activities in humanitarian, peace-building and governance areas, as well as the promotion of human rights. The Joint Inspection Unit had recently recommended more extensive use of UNV in addressing the root causes of conflict. The support of the Executive Board was sought in encouraging United Nations organizations to make even greater use of UNV specialists and fieldworkers in the full spectrum of development, humanitarian and peace activities.

222. She highlighted several facets of UNV operations, including: the severe funding constraints of two programmes transferred to UNV in 1994, United Nations Short-term Advisory Resources (UNISTAR) and the Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN); the legislation by the General Assembly (resolution 50/19) which gave UNV operational responsibility for the White Helmets initiative; and the use of contributions to the UNV Special Voluntary Fund (SVF) for local grass-roots initiatives, stressing the need for early transfer of funds.

223. UNV was redesigning its business processes and undertaking organizational streamlining in order to cope better with expanding demand from programme countries and partner organizations. Outsourcing to Cyprus and the move of UNV headquarters to Bonn were generating some cost-savings. Equally, the relocation to Bonn as the first headquarters of a United Nations organization in Germany, presented UNV with potential new synergies and challenges.

224. The Executive Coordinator informed the Executive Board that to maintain the quality of the UNV programme and operational efficiency, UNV needed a minimum 10 per cent support cost for its extrabudgetary activities. That, she noted, was the equivalent of what most other organizations charged and conformed with UNDP guidelines for agency support costs. The base, which determined the support cost, was the cost of volunteers, and yielded little income.

225. Lessons learnt were fed back into the programme, and a number of evaluations, including of the use of the SVF and national UNVs and volunteer contributions in humanitarian assistance and peace-building, were being finalized. Strategy 2000, for the years 1997 to 2000, was under preparation. In addition, the support of the Executive Board was sought for the designation of 2001 as the International Year of the Volunteer, an idea proposed at a policy forum in Tokyo earlier in the year and fully endorsed in May 1996 by 40 volunteer-sending agencies. UNV believed the designation of an international year by the General Assembly would mobilize recognition and expansion of local, national and international volunteer efforts worldwide.

226. One delegation introduced a draft decision, supported by many others, which included designating 2001 as the International Year of the Volunteer.

227. Another delegation said 1996 had been a landmark year for UNV, as it was the organization's 25th anniversary and the Executive Board had decided to endorse the proposal of the Secretary-General to accept the offer of the Government of Germany to relocate UNV headquarters to Bonn in mid-1996. The representative noted the increased involvement of UNV in humanitarian relief and United Nations peace operations, which was documented in the proportional increases in funds for project budgets received from other United Nations system organizations. UNV was increasingly serving the entire United Nations system and added value to various operations. A good example was the White Helmets initiative, which his Government supported. Through the building-up and strengthening of domestic capacities in the form of national volunteer corps in prevention, relief and rehabilitation, a process could be started whereby affected countries were less reliant on short-term and expensive humanitarian experts brought in for only short periods of time. His Government supported the central role of development in UNV work. In that regard, the UNV Domestic Development Services (DDS) programme, which built upon locally available capacities, merited further and broader support, including from UNDP. The DDS programme covered central areas of the UNDP approach to development. Support to DDS would come at a time when funds received from UNDP had further decreased to about 36 per cent of UNV project budgets for 1995 as compared with about 47 per cent for 1994. The relocation of UNV to Bonn would not only bring it closer to Brussels and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States but it would also increase its visibility in the system and enable it to create new partnerships. Further efforts by the Administrator, as legislated in decision 95/28, to increase programme activities involving United Nations volunteers in light of the expected costs and savings of the relocation would be welcomed.

228. Many speakers congratulated UNV on its 25 years of operations and cited their support for the diversity of UNV activities, with some citing in particular positive views in respect of its work in rehabilitation and conflict prevention, especially with regard to the White Helmets initiative. One delegation queried whether UNV had undertaken any assessment of its history. That delegation, later supported by another, expressed concern that, owing to its move, linkage with the Geneva-based United Nations organizations might be lost.

229. Another delegation underlined the need to pay close attention to the financial situation of UNDP and its effect on UNV, particularly with regard to the development work of the UNISTAR and TOKTEN programmes. That delegation also agreed with the Executive Coordinator that a minimum 10 per cent support cost should be applied for extrabudgetary activities. More details on programme administration, incentives to attract quality volunteers, and efficiency were sought, as was information on the origin and specialities of the volunteers. One delegation expressed concern as to the need for more rapid implementation of SVF projects. Another delegation sought clarification on the procedure regarding Executive Board draft decisions, and whether co-sponsorship was necessary since decisions were adopted by consensus.

230. One delegation expressed the strong support of his Government for the work of the United Nations International Short-term Advisory Resources (UNISTAR) programme, which had cooperated with the private sector in his country. The representative stated that the programme benefited both UNV and multinational corporations and was of great assistance to recipient countries. His Government supported the expansion of the UNISTAR programme in the future and announced a pledge of $100,000 in 1996 as a replenishment to the UNV Trust Fund.

231. The representative of the World Food Programme (WFP) noted that WFP was one of the biggest users of UNV specialists, who played a critical role in WFP operations, both in food-for-work projects and, increasingly, in emergency operations. He expressed the gratitude of WFP for the fruitful cooperation enjoyed with UNV and congratulated UNV on its anniversary.

232. The Executive Coordinator thanked Executive Board members for their observations and guidance, and informed them that the UNV Strategy 2000, which would be made available in working languages, would encompass the views and comments on UNV past performance. With regard to an assessment of its past performance, she noted that five thematic evaluations and 12 in-depth evaluations had taken place last year alone. She concurred that DDS should be strengthened and hoped that UNISTAR and TOKTEN would have a broader base in Europe and developing countries in the future. She noted the current profile of UNV specialists, and referred to related available documentation available to the Board. She regretted the surplus of SVF carry-over noted in the report, given that participatory design and implementation of grass-roots programmes had taken longer than expected. With mechanisms for working with community-based organizations now in place, she was, however, persuaded that disbursements would be expedited. With regard to linkages with Geneva-based and other organizations, she underlined the goal to maintain them in the future through consultative mechanisms such as a "Friends of UNV" network.

233. She thanked all delegations for their support to UNV, and expressed appreciation to the Republic of Korea for its contribution announced at the meeting. She took note of the strong support for the UNISTAR programme and reiterated her intention to seek to strengthen its resource base.

234. The Executive Coordinator expressed her profound gratitude to the Government of Switzerland for having hosted UNV up until the present time and to the Government of Germany, which would do so in the future. It was anticipated that the Secretary-General would inaugurate the new UNV headquarters in Bonn in June 1996.

235. A special event was held in honour of the twenty-fifth anniversary of UNV. The Executive Director noted that a report on the proceedings would be made available to Executive Board members. She welcomed the suggestion that the Board convene an informal meeting in Bonn to pursue the topics relating to the roles of volunteers in tackling the root causes of conflict, discussed at the special event.

236. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/32. United Nations Volunteers

The Executive Board

1. *Takes* note of the report of the Administrator (DP/1996/22);

2. *Notes* the substantial contribution of the United Nations Volunteers programme to humanitarian, peace-keeping, peace-building, human rights and rehabilitation activities as well as to poverty eradication;

3. *Encourages* the United Nations Volunteers to intensify participation in the full spectrum of development, humanitarian and peace activities of the United Nations system and its related organizations;

4. *Recognizes* the work being undertaken by the United Nations Volunteers through the Special Voluntary Fund in supporting community efforts;

5. *Recommends* that the United Nations Volunteers stand ready to cooperate with Governments and the United Nations system bodies in order to replicate successful results at the country level;

6. *Stresses* the need for further contributions, including through, for example, co-financing arrangements, to the Special Voluntary Fund for activities of the United Nations Volunteers, the United Nations Short-Term Advisory Resources, and the Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals and other United Nations Volunteers operations;

7. *Stresses*, in this connection, the importance of accountability and transparency as well as the need for timely reporting on United Nations Volunteers activities to the Executive Board;

8. *Supports* the United Nations Volunteers as the United Nations operational arm of the White Helmets initiative and for the effective implementation of this initiative calls upon countries in a position to do so, to provide support, including financial support, to the window in the Special Voluntary Fund of the United Nations Volunteers, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 49/139B and 50/19 and Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/44;

9. *Acknowledges* the importance of the contribution made by volunteers worldwide and supports United Nations Volunteers efforts to promote further volunteer work;

10. *Takes notes*, in this context, of the proposal of the United Nations Volunteers to consider having the International Year of Volunteers 2001 as one of the instruments to promote volunteerism.

10 May 1996

XI. UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN

237. The Associate Administrator introduced the item. He stated that as a result of aggressive management measures and vigorous resource mobilization, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) had made great strides in recovering from its financial problems of 1995. He assured the Executive Board that UNDP would maintain its rigorous review and direct support in connection with UNIFEM finances. He thanked the Board for its constructive concern and those donors who had increased their financial contributions to the Fund. That support had helped to ensure that UNIFEM remained the strong and viable organization for promoting the advancement of women that Governments and the United Nations system needed.

238. The Administrator, he noted, had been cooperating closely with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) to launch the in-depth evaluation of the UNIFEM programme in line with Executive Board decision 95/32 and the Board-endorsed terms of reference. The evaluation would provide an important opportunity to review the performance of UNIFEM to date and ensure that programmes were strategically focused to achieve maximum impact.

239. In accordance with decision 95/32, UNOPS had undertaken a fully transparent international selection process in strict accordance with its financial rules and procedures. Four organizations had submitted proposals, which were carefully evaluated by a tender evaluation committee. The Committee agreed by consensus that Management Systems International (MSI), a research firm run by women and based in Washington D.C., was best suited to undertake the evaluation. The process had been further reviewed and endorsed by the UNOPS Procurement Review Advisory Committee. Finally, with the endorsement of the Administrator, the Executive Director of UNOPS had authorized UNOPS staff to enter into negotiations with MSI. The negotiations led to a further enhancement of the MSI proposal with a view to ensuring that the terms of reference were fully covered by the proposed approach. The MSI team, which included core team members from developing countries, launched the evaluation in mid-February 1996. The initial phase extended over a six-week period and included an exhaustive review of UNIFEM documentation as well as in-depth interviews. Consultations were held with UNIFEM, UNDP and other United Nations entities, as well as with organizations outside the United Nations system that were closely associated with gender issues.

240. The second phase of the evaluation, to be completed by mid-May, involved visits to countries selected in accordance with the terms of reference. The countries were Brazil, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Morocco, Namibia, Philippines, Senegal, and Tanzania. The final phase of the evaluation was scheduled for mid-June 1996 and would be presented to the Executive Board at its third regular session 1996.

241. The Associate Administrator informed the Executive Board that the Administrator had established a trust fund to facilitate the pledging of contributions to cover the costs associated with the evaluation. Contributions to the trust fund had fully covered the total estimated

evaluation budget of $289,000. He expressed appreciation to those countries who had made contributions. The evaluation would help to enable UNIFEM to play the major role called for by the Fourth World Conference on Women.

242. The Director of UNIFEM delivered an oral report to the Executive Board. She noted that UNIFEM had ended 1995 with an unexpended balance of general resources of $4.1 million. Income to general resources in 1996 was estimated at $13.89 million. At present, the Fund's project costs were estimated to be $11 million in 1996. Administrative costs had remained constant at $3.2 million. As a result, UNIFEM anticipated having sufficient funds to be able to re-establish the operational reserve in late 1996. A detailed proposal on the matter would be presented to the Executive Board at its third regular session 1996. A number of activities to implement the Beijing Platform for Action had now begun. In addition to financial information, the Executive Director provided information on the new programme focus of UNIFEM. The Trust Fund to Eliminate Violence Against Women had been established.

243. Several delegations stated that they were pleased with the progress in financial and programme areas of UNIFEM reported upon and that they looked forward to reviewing the evaluation report at the third regular session 1996. Several delegations congratulated UNIFEM for enhancing its partnerships with other organizations in the United Nations system and with donors. The Fund should work in areas where it had comparative advantage and focus its activities on the political and economic empowerment of women, avoiding a scattering of small projects. One delegation requested more specific information on the programme work of UNIFEM, in particular concerning its activities in different regions, especially Africa. Some delegations outlined measures taken by their national Governments regarding the empowerment of women, which were in line with the programme focus of UNIFEM. One delegation asked for more donors to become involved in the Trust Fund to Eliminate Violence Against Women. It was suggested that after the third regular session 1996, UNIFEM should report only annually to the Executive Board.

244. The Director of UNIFEM responded to the questions and comments raised. She noted that UNIFEM had shifted from away from involvement in many small projects, in favour of a programme approach. The annual report of UNIFEM, which would be made available to the Executive Board, would contain an overview of projects, including by region. She assured the Executive Board that most UNIFEM resources were spent in Africa. She also noted that the Fund had programmes to assist women in war-torn African countries. In response to a query regarding the gender balance among staff in UNIFEM, she informed the Board that UNIFEM had seven male staff members. In response to another question, she stated that projects that it had not been possible to implement during the previous year because of financial constraints would be re-phased as the funding situation improved. UNIFEM also looked forward to undertaking new projects. In order to fulfil its role in follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, it was hoped that UNIFEM could double its resource base to $25 million in the future.

245. The Executive Board took note of the oral reports on UNIFEM.

XII. UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR PROJECT SERVICES

246. The Executive Director introduced his report on organizational changes in the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) (DP/1996/23). He described the measures that UNOPS had taken in the first year of its existence as a separate entity to improve its performance with regard to the quality of its services, client confidence and recovery of its project portfolio. He noted that, as a result in no small part of the special efforts of UNOPS staff, the previous downward trend in the portfolio of UNOPS had been reversed and that the portfolio had been rebuilt to a level equal to that before the merger discussions.

247. The Executive Director stressed two elements of the UNOPS organizational reform process. The first concerned the focus on integrated operational teams, which combined under single management the functional capacities and authority necessary to meet the needs of clients. The second concerned the continuation of the UNOPS policy of decentralization, regarding which the Executive Director reported on the agreement of the Management Coordination Committee to the proposed relocation of the Division of Procurement Projects to Copenhagen and that of the Rehabilitation and Social Sustainability Unit to Geneva, both scheduled for mid-1996.

248. Clarifying the somewhat different usage of United Nations terminology as it applied to an implementing entity, the Executive Director noted that the organizational unit presented on page 7 of document DP/1996/23 as the Policy and Legal Division had, subsequent to the release of the report, been renamed the Policy and Contracts Division.

249. Five delegations took the floor to comment on the item, with several expressing appreciation for the inclusion of charts in the document, which made some of the concepts clearer. All speakers expressed support for the reorganization intiatives, most particularly for the move towards the formation of integration teams. Two speakers expressed interest in learning more about the strategic directions of UNOPS, mentioning specifically their desire for additional information regarding the business planning process mentioned in the document.

250. One delegation stressed the importance of UNOPS staff in the field maintaining close contact and regular communication with one another in order to ensure that problems were either avoided or resolved promptly at the local level. In that context, the speaker also voiced the expectation that decentralized units would have the full complement of staff and delegated authority necessary for full responsiveness to client needs. The delegation also urged UNOPS to continue paying close attention to the rates which it was charging for non-project procurement services and to ensure that UNOPS communicated clearly with funding sources regarding the considerations according to which fees were determined.

251. The Executive Director acknowledged the interest shown in the UNOPS business planning process and clarified the role of the business plan as an internal management tool that facilitated the building of consensus within UNOPS and interaction with the Management Coordination Committee. Noting that an operational document such as the business plan could not normally be part of the documentation submitted to the Executive Board, he stated that UNOPS would gladly make the business plan and other such documents available to interested delegations.

252. UNOPS took its communications with key clients very seriously, the Executive Director noted, and intended to build further on the one-on-one meetings it held regularly with such clients. Addressing the comments concerning delegation of authority to outposted UNOPS units, he emphasized that UNOPS policy for decentralization encompassed full delegation of authority necessary to avoid creating additional layers of bureaucracy. That approach also created the requisite conditions for full accountability.

253. With regard to the issue of rate-setting, the Executive Director pointed out that the rates associated with non-project services were well below those for project services. UNOPS would, however, continue to strive to achieve the right balance between both cost containment and control of risk to the resources placed by clients in the care of UNOPS.

254. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/33. United Nations Office for Project Services

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the Executive Director (DP/1996/23);

2. Encourages the Executive Director to continue his efforts to make the United Nations Office for Project Services more innovative and cost-effective, as recommended by the Management Coordination Committee;

3. Requests that the Executive Director keep the Executive Board apprised of the operational results and financial implications of the reorganization of the United Nations Office for Project Services within the framework of future annual reports, submitted through the Management Coordination Committee.

15 May 1996

XIII. OTHER MATTERS

A. Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)

255. The Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) addressed the Executive Board, as requested at its second regular session 1996. He stated that the main priority for the Programme in its first four months of operation had been at the country level, with the establishment of 103 country-based theme groups, covering 109 countries. Where present, the six co-sponsoring organizations of UNAIDS were members of the theme groups, and in many countries, other United Nations system organizations were members. Governments were also represented in a majority of the theme groups, either as full members or as observers. He further noted that more than three quarters of the theme groups were chaired by the representative of the World Health Organization while 16 per cent were chaired by UNDP Resident Representatives. It was recommended that, in order to increase diversity, the chairs of the theme groups be selected on a rotating basis among the co-sponsors.

256. The Executive Director informed the Executive Board that 12 of 20 UNAIDS country programme advisers (CPAs) selected were in place. It was expected that some 30 CPAs would be appointed by the end of June 1996.

257. UNAIDS and UNDP had signed an agreement establishing a working arrangement for the provision of administrative support services to UNAIDS country-level activities, including disbursements of funds for national HIV/AIDS activities. The Executive Board was informed that two of 22 national programme officers (NPOs), in Thailand and Botswana, were acting as UNAIDS focal points and one UNV specialist was acting as UNAIDS focal point in El Salvador. Countries where national programme officers would act as UNAIDS focal points were being identified on a case-by-case basis. The arrangements for fully integrating NPOs were the following: (a) where there was no CPA, UNDP NPOs could act as CPAs, devoting half of their time to the theme group work; (b) in that capacity, the UNAIDS focal point should report in the same manner as the other CPAs, first to the chairperson of the theme group, and then to the UNAIDS secretariat; and (c) all NPOs (whether UNAIDS focal points or not) would be included in the UNAIDS information network and could receive the same training as UNAIDS field staff.

258. He informed the Executive Board that a UNAIDS staff member would be posted to the Office for United Nations System Support and Services. Training in the area of HIV/AIDS for resident coordinators, both at the country level and at the ILO Turin Centre, was also proceeding. Steps were also being taken towards greater harmonization of activities of the co-sponsors at the global level, an area in which continued work was needed. The Executive Director underlined the need to concentrate efforts on youth, as over 50 per cent of new HIV infections occurred in those under 24 years of age, with the majority in those much younger than 20. In that regard, education was a key component of UNAIDS work at the country level, with successful collaboration among United Nations organizations already seen.

259. Given the difficult financial situation of some co-sponsors, resource mobilization was a key priority. While it had initially been hoped that financing could come from the core budgets of the co-sponsors, it now appeared that supplementary funding was needed. A joint resource mobilization effort for co-sponsors activities, the "Global Appeal", had been discussed recently by the Committee of Co-sponsoring Organizations, with a workplan soon to be finalized.

260. In conclusion, the Executive Director cited the obstacles faced in establishing a joint and co-sponsored programme, including resistance to any new programme, synchronization of governance arrangements, the structural and programmatic differences among the co-sponsors, lack of decision-making power at the country level for the representatives of some co-sponsors, and differing planning cycles. He also noted that UNAIDS was not yet fully staffed. Plans for the immediate future, to be discussed at the Programme Coordinating Board in June 1996, included further development of UNAIDS planned activities and of coherent, joint plans with co-sponsors, co-ownership with all co-sponsors, particularly at the country level, a framework for evaluation and monitoring, and elaboration of best practices.

261. Several delegations took the floor to express their appreciation for the statement. Queries were raised as to what the Executive Board could do to facilitate the work of UNAIDS at the country level, on the role of NGOs in UNAIDS, the effectiveness of UNFPA in UNAIDS at the country level, and the reasons for problems in staffing. Information on the priorities of UNAIDS was also sought, particularly in the most vulnerable countries.

262. The Executive Director responded that the Executive Board could insure that UNDP and UNFPA had the resources they needed to continue to work on HIV/AIDS activities. The Board could also encourage the support of UNAIDS by the two organizations and the collaborative work of NPOs with UNAIDS. He noted that there were five representatives of NGOs on the Programme Coordinating Board. Effective work was under way in countries where there had been strong cooperation, with Governments and with NGOs. With regard to priorities, he emphasized that the work of UNAIDS was for the very long term, and that strengthening the capacity of countries was of vital concern. In that regard, there could be no one single approach since UNAIDS had to promote a double strategy, which included both risk reduction and vulnerability reduction. The contribution of UNFPA had been very effective, and in cooperation with intercountry teams, the purchase of condoms in the effort to reduce risk, was now being discussed. Staff for UNAIDS was selected on the basis of merit and quality as well as diversity on a geographical basis. He noted that 40 per cent of the Professionals in UNAIDS were women.

B. Round-table process

263. One delegation suggested that the subject of the round-table process be discussed at future sessions of the Executive Board. The representative noted that the round-table process had been set up to meet certain criteria, and that recent round-table meetings had not reached their targets, a factor that should be examined by the Board. Avenues for discussion could be whether the round-table meetings should be more technical, more focused on development objectives and whether they should involve more partners.

C. United Nations Capital Development Fund

264. One delegation informed the Executive Board about consultations among the major donors to the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF). The representative referred to the challenge to donors offered by UNCDF in 1995 to provide predictable funding for the period 1996-1999. At that time, the Fund had set out goals and new policy directions and had determined that it would be able to concentrate on substance rather than fund-raising in those three years if their proposal was accepted. In addition, at the end of the period, the attainment of the goals would be assessed, and on the basis

of the performance of UNCDF, the future of the Fund determined. The eight countries wished to respond seriously to the challenge and had agreed to aim at providing the financial predictability sought by UNCDF.

265. The representative read the statement on the funding intention of donor countries for UNCDF: "The eight donor countries (Belgium, Denmark, France, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland) recognize that the new policy framework of the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) is aimed at giving new momentum to the work of the organization and that the Fund should be given the opportunity to concentrate on delivering a solid product and to demonstrate its capabilities. For this purpose, predictability in the financial contributions for a three-year period has been requested by UNCDF, ensuring that the budget remains at least at its present level. The eight donor countries jointly recognize the funding needs of UNCDF and declare their aim of providing resources commensurate with this need, subject to the parliamentary procedures and approval and bearing in mind the implementation of the annual budget. The eight donor countries will meet annually to assess the realization of their intention. An evaluation will be carried out in 1999 to assess the work of UNCDF and to provide the basis for a decision on its future activities. The eight donors encourage UNCDF to reach out to new donors."

266. Several speakers took the floor to thank the eight donor countries for their decision, which would ensure greater predictability with regard to resources for UNCDF. The Fund was an important instrument in poverty eradication. One speaker said that it was a good example for other programmes and that the Executive Board should discuss the linkage between funding and resources, particularly following the conclusion of the follow-up to General Assembly resolution 48/162. The Administrator commended the eight donors on their commitment and underlined the key role of UNCDF in the United Nations family. He cited the need for similar predictability of resources for UNDP as well as for UNIFEM and for the United Nations Office to Combat Desertification and Drought (UNSO).

D. UNDP and the International Olympic Committee

267. The Director of the UNDP European Office informed the Executive Board that the Administrator and the President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) had signed a cooperation agreement that brought both organizations together at national and international levels to sponsor activities which contributed to the eradication of poverty and the promotion of human development. The initiative, "An Appeal of Olympic Athletes against Poverty" had been prepared jointly and drew attention to the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. Emphasis would be on action at the local level that involved communities and young people, and would, it was hoped, go beyond the current year. The IOC had offered UNDP a site at the International Olympic Village, where the Appeal would be displayed and signed by Olympians.

E. Miscellaneous

268. One delegation asked for an updated staff list of UNDP and UNFPA.

269. The same delegation called for the more substantive involvement of representatives of specialized agencies in the discussions held during the Executive Board.

F. Conclusion of the session

270. The Executive Board concluded its work by adopting the following decision:

95/34. Overview of decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its annual session 1996

The Executive Board

Recalls that during its annual session 1996 it:

ITEM 1: ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Approved the agenda and work plan for its annual session 1996 (DP/1995/L.7/Rev.1);

Approved the report of the second regular session 1996 (DP/1995/17 and Corr.1);

Approved the following schedule of future sessions of the Executive Board subject to the approval of the Committee on Conferences:

Third regular session 1996: 9-13 September 1996
First regular session 1997: 13-17 January 1997
Second regular session 1997: 10-14 March 1997
Annual session 1997: 12-23 May 1997 - New York
Third regular session 1997: 15-19 September 1997

Agreed to the subjects to be discussed at the third session 1996 and first session 1997 as listed in the annex;

ITEM 2: RULES OF PROCEDURE

Adopted decision 96/25 of 15 May 1996 on matters relating to rules of procedure, documentation and the functioning of the Executive Board;

ITEM 3: UNFPA: REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND PROGRAMME-LEVEL ACTIVITIES

Took note of the annual report of the Executive Director for 1995 (DP/FPA/1996/17 (Part I)), taking into account the views expressed by delegations during the discussion on the item as reflected in the report on the session;

Took note of the report on the status of financial implementation of country programmes and projects (DP/FPA/1996/19);

Took note of the periodic report on evaluation (DP/FPA/1996/20);

Adopted decision 96/26 of 8 May 1996 on the work plan of the United Nations Population Fund for 1997-2000 and request for programme expenditure authority;

Adopted decision 96/27 of 17 May 1996 on enhancing the absorptive capacity and financial resource utilization in recipient countries, in particular in Africa;

ITEM 4: MISSION STATEMENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND

Adopted decision 96/28 of 8 May 1996 on the mission statement of the United Nations Population Fund;

UNDP/UNFPA JOINT SEGMENT

ITEM 5: UNDP/UNFPA: REPORTS TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Took note of the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (DP/FPA/1996/17 (Part II)) and the report of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (DP/1996/18/Add.2) and agreed to transmit them, together with, as annexes: (a) the extract of the report on the annual session of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board dealing with the joint UNDP/UNFPA segment; (b) the extract of the report on the annual session of the Board dealing with the implementation of programming arrangements; and (c) the extract of the report on the second regular session 1996 of the Board dealing with evaluation;

ITEM 6: UNDP/UNFPA: HARMONIZATION OF PRESENTATION OF BUDGETS AND ACCOUNTS

Took note of the oral progress report of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund on the harmonization of presentation of budgets and accounts with the comments made thereon;

UNDP SEGMENT

ITEM 7: UNDP: ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR AND RELATED MATTERS

Took note of the annual report of the Administrator for 1995: introduction (DP/1996/18); main programme record (DP/1996/18/Add.1); reports of the Joint Inspection Unit of interest to UNDP (DP/1996/18/Add.3); and statistical annex (DP/1996/18/Add.4), taking into account the views expressed by delegations during the discussion of the item as reflected in the report on the session;

Took note of the report on the role of UNDP in the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (DP/1996/20);

Adopted decision 96/29 of 15 May 1996 on the UNDP mission statement.

ITEM 8: UNDP: MATTERS RELATING TO THE PROGRAMMING CYCLES

Took note of the report of the Administrator on the implementation of the successor programming arrangements with the comments made thereon (DP/1996/21);

Adopted decision 96/30 of 17 May 1996 extending special status to Namibia equivalent to that given to least developed countries;

ITEM 9: AGENCY SUPPORT COSTS

Adopted decision 96/31 of 15 May 1996 on the implementation of the support costs components of the successor programming arrangements;

ITEM 10: UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS

Adopted decision 96/32 of 10 May 1996 on the United Nations Volunteers;

ITEM 11: UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN

Took note of the oral report on the United Nations Development Fund for Women;

ITEM 12: UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR PROJECT SERVICES

Adopted decision 96/33 of 15 May 1996 on the United Nations Office for Project Services;

ITEM 13: OTHER MATTERS

Took note of the presentation made by the UNAIDS representative.

17 May 1996

Annex

ALLOCATION OF SUBJECTS FOR FUTURE SESSIONS

The following subjects are scheduled for consideration at future sessions:

Third regular session (9-13 September 1996)

Item 1. Organizational matters

Item 2. Matters relating to rules of procedure, documentation and the functioning of the Executive Board

Item 3. Annual work plan for the Executive Board 1997

UNDP segment

Item 4. UNDP: Matters relating to programming cycles: Follow-up to Executive Board decisions 95/23 and 95/26

Item 5. UNDP: Financial, budgetary and administrative matters (including follow-up to Executive Board decision 96/21 on the Office of United Nations System Support Services and report on the activities of the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office)

Item 6. UNDP: Country programmes and related matters

Item 7. United Nations Development Fund for Women: Follow-up to Executive Board decisions 95/18 and 95/32

UNFPA/UNDP segment

Item 8. UNFPA/UNDP: Harmonization of presentation of budgets and accounts

Item 9. UNFPA/UNDP: Report on field visit to Africa

UNFPA segment

Item 10. UNFPA: Financial, budgetary and administrative matters

Item 11. UNFPA: Country programmes and related matters

Item 12. UNFPA: Oral report on interagency coordination in health policy and programming

Item 13. Other matters

First regular session 1997 (13-17 January 1997)

- Organizational matters
- Matters relating to rules of procedure, documentation and the functioning of the Executive Board
- Annual work plan for the Executive Board 1997

UNFPA segment

- Country programmes and related matters
- Audit reports

UNFPA/UNDP segment

- Follow-up to and preparations for the work of the Economic and Social Council (95/37)
- Harmonization of presentation of budgets and accounts

UNDP segment

- Matters relating to the programming cycle: Report on assistance to Myanmar (96/01)
- Audit reports (95/3)
- Country cooperation frameworks (95/25)
- United Nations technical cooperation activities (94/27)

Part four

THIRD REGULAR SESSION

Held at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 6 to 17 May 1996

I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

1. The President, H. E. Mrs. Annette des Iles (Trinidad and Tobago), opened the third regular session 1996 of the Executive Board. She assured the Executive Board that with the help of the members of the Bureau she would continue to do her best to ensure that meetings would run as smoothly as possible. She depended on the participants to ensure the successful and timely completion of the work of the session.

2. She informed the Executive Board that Mr. Jimmy Blas, Second Secretary of the Permanent Mission of the Philippines to the United Nations, would replace Ms. Cecilia Rebong as Vice President of the Board and Asian Group coordinator during the present session, when she would be absent from New York.

3. The President noted that a new item, the draft work plan for 1997 for the Executive Board, would be considered at the session. The work plan offered an opportunity to re-think the way the Board operated and to tackle issues related to the role and operations of UNDP and UNFPA, with the objective of making their contributions to development cooperation more useful and effective. Continued improvements through preparation of rules of procedure and other measures to use available time effectively were also being undertaken. She also noted that a light system on the podium had been instituted to regulate the length of speaker's statements. The system would be utilized to remind delegations that limited time was available and should be devoted to issues directly relevant to the item under discussion.

4. The President informed the Executive Board that since the annual session of the Board, the Bureau had held four meetings, on 31 May, 25 July, 26 August, and 9 September. The Bureau had decided on the scheduling and chairmanship of the ad hoc working group on rules of procedure established in accordance with Executive Board decision 96/25, and the documentation to be prepared by the secretariat for the initial work of the working group. The Bureau had been consulted on the process of preparation by the secretariat of a draft work plan for 1997. Informal consultations had been held on UNDP and UNFPA financial issues, on the report on the evaluation of UNIFEM, on the UNFPA information strategy, and on harmonization of budget and accounts. The ad hoc working group on rules of procedure had held three meetings, on 13 and 14 June and 29 August. The members of the Programme had met in an informal consultation on the 1997 Human Development Report. Following discussions, the Bureau had reviewed proposals on Board field visits in 1997. It had also reviewed the agenda for the session and had made a number of proposals regarding the work plan, which had been presented to the pre-session informal briefing held on 26 August.

5. The Administrator welcomed the participants and stated that he looked forward to a useful and productive session. He drew attention to items that would be taken up within the UNDP segment, and encouraged participants to attend the informal briefing on the internal change management process in UNDP, an exercise that would have a major impact on the proposals to be made to the Executive Board at the annual session 1997. He commended Board members who had worked on the draft work plan for 1997, a process that would streamline the Board's work. With regard to resources, the Administrator stated that UNDP anticipated that in 1996 all traditional donors would sustain or increase

contributions, with the exception of the United States. He thanked the Government of Italy for announcing that it would make a higher contribution in 1996 to UNDP core resources than it had originally pledged, representing a 10 per cent increase over the 1995 contribution.

6. The Administrator informed the Executive Board that he had recently participated in the High-Level Seminar on African Development, held in Tokyo, and in the annual meeting of Nordic countries on UNDP held in Helsinki. In June, he had paid official visits to Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Slovakia and Turkey, and had participated in the regional meeting of resident representatives from the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (RBEC) region. He noted that the RBEC meeting was the last in a series of regional meetings, at which the new programme directions of UNDP had been discussed. He was very impressed with the quality of resident coordinators and resident representatives and their staffs, as well as the unique nature of the country office network, calling it an irreplaceable resource. He also commented on the $617 million pledged by donors at the round-table meeting for Rwanda in June, the UNDP involvement in the Habitat II conference, the opening of a UNDP office in Sarajevo, UNDP assistance to countries facing natural disasters, the 30 July signing of a cooperation agreement with the International Monetary Fund, the 17 July launching of the Human Development Report 1996, and the recent agreement with the Hewlett Packard company for the sustainable development network in programme countries. He also emphasized that UNDP had moved forward with its poverty eradication mandate, noting initiatives taken at the country level. An information kit on poverty eradication would be distributed to the Board at the present session.

7. The Secretary of the Board introduced documents DP/1996/L.16 and Add.1. She noted that all official documentation had been submitted in accordance with the set deadlines. The conference room papers had been provided in the three working languages. Document DP/1996/CRP.16 was for the use of delegations in conjunction with the UNDP informal session on change management to be held on 11 September. An informal briefing with the UNFPA country representatives from Cambodia and Honduras would be held on 12 September.

8. The Executive Board approved the following agenda for its third regular session, as contained in document DP/1996/L.16:

Item 1. Organizational matters

Item 2. Matters relating to rules of procedure, documentation and the functioning of the Executive Board

Item 3. Annual work plan for the Executive Board 1997

UNDP segment

Item 4. UNDP: Matters relating to programming cycles: Follow-up to Executive Board decision 95/26

Item 5. UNDP: Financial, budgetary and administrative matters (including follow-up to Executive Board decision 96/21 on the Office of

United Nations System Support Services and report on the activities of the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office)

Item 6. United Nations Office for Project Services

Item 7. UNDP: Country programmes and related matters

Item 8. United Nations Development Fund for Women: Follow-up to Executive Board decisions 95/18 and 95/32

UNFPA/UNDP segment

Item 9. UNFPA/UNDP: Harmonization of presentation of budgets and accounts

Item 10. UNFPA/UNDP: Report on field visit of the Executive Board

UNFPA segment

Item 11. UNFPA: Financial, budgetary and administrative matters

Item 12. UNFPA: Country programmes and related matters

Item 13. UNFPA: Oral report on inter-agency coordination in health policy and programming

Item 14. Other matters

9. The Executive Board approved the work plan, contained in document DP/1995/L.16/Add.1, as orally amended.

10. It was noted that the report of the annual session 1996 (DP/1996/19) had been approved at that session on 17 May.

11. Delegations commented on a paper distributed by the secretariat on the allocation of subjects for the first regular session 1997 and the dates for 1997 sessions. Some delegations noted the extensive amount of time needed to discuss UNDP country cooperation frameworks (CCF) and UNFPA country programmes. One speaker asked that the "no-objection" system be strictly enforced in 1997 given the large number of programmes that would be before the Executive Board for approval. One delegation proposed that if five or more countries indicated in writing that they wished to speak on a particular CCF then the discussion should be held outside of the normal meeting hours. Another speaker underlined the need to have the necessary documentation available on time. He noted that it would be difficult to set a deadline two weeks ahead of the Board session for delegations to indicate their intention to intervene. Another speaker suggested that upon receipt of five written requests for consideration of a CCF, the relevant country office could be alerted.

12. One delegation requested that the report requested in decision 96/40 on management, accountability and the Reserve for Field Accommodation be considered together with the report on the UNDP accountability system at the first regular

session 1997. The Secretary noted that the proposal on the merger of the reports would be considered.

13. The Executive Board approved the dates of the sessions for 1997, taking into account the comments made. One delegation noted that the number of sessions held would be decided at the first regular session 1997, concurrent with the adoption of the rules of procedure for the Executive Board.

14. The Executive Board approved the allocation of subjects for the first regular session (13-17 January 1997).

15. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) of UNFPA, on behalf of the Executive Director and UNFPA staff, expressed his appreciation to the members of the 1996 Executive Board. The Fund had taken note of the ways to improve its work. He also thanked the members of the Bureau and the secretariat of UNDP. He looked forward to continued collaboration between UNFPA and the Board.

16. The Administrator thanked the Executive Board for its seriousness and professionalism as well as for its achievements during 1996. He also recognized the outgoing and incoming members of the Executive Board and paid special tribute to the President and the Vice Presidents for their commitment.

17. The representative of Canada, one of the Vice Presidents, on behalf of the Western European and Other Group, thanked the President and other Bureau members, the other members of his regional group, the Administrator, the UNFPA Executive Director, the Executive Board secretariat and his Canadian colleagues, for their support throughout the year.

18. The President thanked all of those involved with the 1996 Executive Board, including the UNDP and UNFPA leadership and staff members, and all the Executive Board and Bureau members.

II. MATTERS RELATING TO RULES OF PROCEDURE, DOCUMENTATION AND THE FUNCTIONING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

19. The representative of Spain introduced the final report of the working group on documentation (DP/1996/26) issued pursuant to Executive Board decision 96/6. Gratitude was expressed to the secretariat staffs of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and the United Nations Office of Conference and Support Services (UNOCSS) for their valuable contributions to the working group. The working group had taken into account comments made by various delegations during the discussion of the item at the annual session 1996. The goal of the working group had been to achieve the timely distribution of documents in all official languages without negatively affecting the smooth functioning of the Executive Board. The draft decision included in the document provided guidelines on the length of documents, timing for submission of documents, and distribution in "yellow" copies. He noted that provisions were being considered to circulate documents electronically in the future.

20. Many delegations thanked the working group for its report. Several speakers expressed reservations on some of the provisions in the draft decision. Differing views were expressed on the provision that the Executive Board could decide to refuse to consider a report that exceeded the number of pages set out in the annex to the decision. Some speakers requested more flexibility in the consideration of documentation, including the allowance for the Executive Board to reserve the right to consider a document if it so chose even if page limitations were exceeded. While several delegations supported page limitations, without strict enforcement, others strongly advocated the instituting of firm guidelines on document length. It was suggested that the Executive Board could request more information beyond that included in the documentation when needed. Several delegations underlined the need for attention to good quality and relevance of documentation. One delegation proposed that statistical information be included in annexes. Support was expressed for the proposed length of the summary of each document.

21. The need for submission of documents by UNDP and UNFPA to UNOCSS 10 weeks prior to the start of a session was also questioned by some speakers while others supported the provision, stating that it enabled them to work more effectively. Several delegations advocated the electronic distribution of documentation as cost-effective and efficient. One delegation asked that advance copies of documentation referred to in paragraph 6 of the draft decision be made available in English rather than the language of submission, as stated in the document. Another delegation requested that observers receive documentation automatically without having to make the request in writing. It was also suggested that reports should be marked for action by the Executive Board or for information. One delegation, noting the small size of the UNDP editorial unit and addressing the Administrator, queried whether the Executive Board Secretariat resources were adequate.

22. The Executive Board approved the following decision:

96/45. Documentation

The Executive Board

1. Recalls the importance of strict observance of the resolutions and rules establishing language arrangements for the different bodies and organs of the United Nations, in particular General Assembly resolutions 50/11 and 50/206;

2. Decides to establish page limits for documents to be submitted to the Executive Board, as contained in the annex to the present decision;

3. Requests the Administrator and the Executive Director to continue to uphold and seek to improve the quality of the reports submitted to the Executive Board, making them more concise and action-oriented and to enforce, where appropriate, the page limits set out in the annex to the present decision;

4. Decides that:

(a) Reports over five pages long (excluding country programming documents) shall have an executive summary;

(b) Statistical annexes, tables, case studies and similar documentation shall, to the extent possible, be presented in addenda to the main document;

5. Also decides that any report exceeding the number of pages set out in the annex to the present decision shall be considered only on an exceptional basis and if duly justified to the Executive Board;

6. Requests the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund to comply with the six-week rule established by the General Assembly and most recently reaffirmed in its resolution 50/206 by undertaking all possible efforts to ensure that documents are submitted to the United Nations Office of Conference and Support Services 10 weeks before the start of a session; and to maintain close coordination with the United Nations Office of Conference and Support Services in all matters pertaining to the submission and issuance of documentation, including the electronic distribution of documentation submitted to the Executive Board;

7. Decides, on a temporary basis, that in cases where a report has not been issued in all languages six weeks before the start of a session, the secretariat may distribute advance copies of the report at that time to the members of the Executive Board, including through electronic means where possible, in the language of submission; and that such documentation be also made available to observers at the same time;

8. Requests the Administrator and the Executive Director to examine whether current staffing levels in the respective secretariats are adequate to meet the provisions approved in the present decision for quality, length and timely distribution of documentation;

9. Calls upon all members of the Executive Board to exercise restraint in requesting reports and policy papers and to consider the possibility of greater use of oral reports;

10. Reaffirms the principle of the simultaneous distribution of all conference room papers in the three working languages before the start of or during a session.

13 September 1996

Annex

PAGE LIMITS FOR REPORTS SUBMITTED TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

UNDP

1. Policy papers shall not exceed 15 pages;

2. Country cooperation frameworks shall follow a common format and shall not exceed the range of 6-10 pages;

3. Reports concerning budgetary and financial matters shall not be subject to the 15-page limit but shall nonetheless be as concise as possible, with due regard to the need to present statistical annexes and data in addenda to the main document in line with paragraph 3 of the present decision.

UNFPA

1. Policy papers shall not exceed 15 pages;

2. New country programmes shall not exceed the range of 6-10 pages;

3. Requests for extensions and/or additional resources for country programmes shall not exceed the range of 3-5 pages;

4. Reports concerning budgetary and financial matters shall not be subject to the 15-page limit but shall nonetheless be as concise as possible, with due regard to the need to present statistical annexes and data in addenda to the main document in line with paragraph 3 of the present decision.

Rules of procedure

23. In accordance with Executive Board decision 96/25, the President presented the interim report on the progress achieved by the ad hoc open-ended working group on rules of procedure, contained in document DP/1996/CRP.12. The working group, chaired by Ms. Cecilia Rebong of the Philippines, Vice President of the Executive Board, had convened meetings on 13 and 14 June and 29 August, completing a first reading of the draft rules of procedure prepared by the secretariat. A chairperson's text would be presented to the next meeting, to be held in early October 1996. A compilation text of comments received in writing and made orally at the meetings would be available. It was anticipated that a final draft of the rules of procedure would be presented at the first regular session 1997.

24. One delegation had reservations on convening meetings of the working group in October 1996, when there would be a number of conflicting meetings of United Nations bodies. The Secretary noted that in order to comply with the deadlines for submitting documentation in time for translation into the United Nations official languages and in order to present the draft rules of procedure to the

first regular session 1997, the working group would have to conclude its work by the end of October 1996.

25. The Executive Board took note of the interim report on the progress achieved by the ad hoc working group on rules of procedure (DP/1996/CRP.12).

III. ANNUAL WORK PLAN FOR THE EXECUTIVE BOARD 1997

26. The Secretary of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board recalled that in Executive Board decision 96/25, adopted at the annual session 1996, the Board had decided to introduce the work plan as a tool to enhance its working methods. An outline of issues that could be considered by the Executive Board in 1997 would be reviewed at the current session. She noted that a preliminary draft of the outline had been discussed by senior managers at UNDP and UNFPA. It had then been distributed at the pre-session informal meeting of the Board on 26 August, with comments incorporated to the extent possible into the current version, contained in document DP/1996/CRP.13. Following consideration of the document at the current session, and based on the guidance of the Executive Board, it was hoped that a revised draft work plan would be presented for approval by the Board at the first regular session 1997.

27. The Secretary gave an overview of the organization of the draft outline and the tables contained therein. She noted that the tables had been prepared on the basis of the respective organizational plans of UNDP and UNFPA and what each organization considered as its main objectives for 1997, taking into account the main decisions of the Executive Board and relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The organizations had also used the opportunity to consolidate a number of reports that formerly came under separate items or reporting procedures, and in some cases proposed their rescheduling. As requested by some delegations, the reports had been re-grouped under items "for action" and "for information" and those items proposed for consideration at the annual session and those that could be reviewed at regular sessions. The nature of the report and the deadline for preparation of the reports by each organization was also indicated. The notation of "target date" on table 4 was to be replaced with "deadline for preparation of report". The deadline was established on the basis of the present seven- or nine-week submission deadline. An agenda for the first regular session 1997 was proposed in the annex to the document.

28. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Resources and External Affairs of UNDP stated that much thought and consultation had gone into the preparation of the draft outline of issues. He emphasized that senior management of UNDP was committed to the successful implementation of the plan. The organization welcomed the initiative of the Executive Board to structure its work around commonly agreed-upon priority issues in order to help and support UNDP in its efforts to ensure sustainable human development and to elevate its debate at the policy and strategy levels and to avoid micro-management. He then gave an overview of the proposals contained in the conference room paper. He stated that it would be useful to review the preparation of reports for the Board with a view to making them more concise, more policy and strategy

oriented, and a better tool for helping the Board in its decision-making process.

29. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) of UNFPA stated that the outline of the work plan would place priority issues in perspective for the Executive Board. He explained how the Fund had drawn up the outline, as UNDP had done. The Fund attached great importance to the development of the work plan and looked forward to an exchange of ideas on meeting the Board's request. An initial brainstorming meeting had been held, followed by the compilation of a preliminary list of priority issues that had been discussed by senior management. At a second meeting, the concepts had been refined and placed in thematic areas and reviewed in the context of the priorities arising from the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), as approved by the Executive Board. The concepts were grouped according to five major themes, as shown, although they were closely interconnected. The five themes presented in the document were: programme priorities; programme implementation; programme support; resources; and budgetary and financial issues. The Deputy Executive Director pointed out that the accomplishment of all themes depended on the approval of the biennial administrative and programme support services (APSS) budget, which would be brought before the Board in 1997. That issue was, therefore, a priority area in the consideration of budgetary and financial issues.

30. Many delegations thanked the secretariat for the outline of issues for the work plan. It was noted that the plan aimed to strengthen the working methods of the Executive Board and reduce micro-management. Speakers made both general comments on the use of the plan as well as specific remarks on the tables and subjects included.

31. Many speakers noted that the work plans as presented included a large number of topics and called for greater prioritization by both UNDP and UNFPA among the subjects included for consideration. In the case of UNDP, the importance of poverty eradication as a major objective was underlined by many delegations. One speaker suggested that poverty eradication could be broken down into methodological, thematic and geographic issues. Some noted the importance of 1997 as the first year of the new programming arrangements. It was requested that the plan include flexibility to add items during the year.

32. Several delegations requested that the subjects for consideration by the Economic and Social Council in 1997 contained in paragraph 54 of General Assembly resolution 50/120, specifically, capacity-building, field and regional level coordination, and resources, be included as priority issues in the work plan 1997. With regard to resources, targets and a programme-funding strategy should also be discussed, particularly in light of the provisions of Executive Board decision 95/23.

33. It was emphasized that at the annual session the Executive Board should concentrate on policy issues, since there was representation among delegations from capitals. For the annual session, the Board must have balance and prioritize the items for consideration. The inclusion of the item on change management was welcomed. The need to stagger the consideration of the large number of country cooperation frameworks and UNFPA country programmes was also

underlined. The format of UNFPA country programmes could also be examined. One delegation suggested that UNDP and UNFPA issue joint reports or hold joint presentations on items such as gender in development, support to the resident coordinator system, and capacity development.

34. The need for UNDP priorities ultimately to have an effect at the grass-roots level in developing countries was underlined by one delegation. The ratio of benefit to administrative costs of interventions and accountability to taxpayers and people at the grass-roots level must be examined. That delegation also emphasized the need for a strategy on multilateral-bilateral cooperation. The annual report, a useful product for encouraging greater understanding among the public and government decision makers, must be available in languages in time for use by donor countries. It was important to include data on income, impact at the grass-roots level and success stories. Further discussion on the annual report was needed. Information on problems faced by UNDP in its cooperation with other United Nations entities was also needed.

35. One delegation proposed that the main programme record of the annual report of the Administrator include five chapters: one for each of the four UNDP focus areas and one for programme management issues. Information on UNDP activities with regard to the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa could be included in the report on the role of UNDP in the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. One delegation requested that a report on interregional cooperation be included in the table listing reports to be considered in 1997, as discussed at the annual session 1996.

36. Several other items listed in the document as "for information" could be "for action", such as the reports on the United Nations Capital Development Fund, harmonization of budgets and accounts, the revised budget estimates for UNDP and the budget of the United Nations Office for Project Services. Some delegations suggested that the report to the Economic and Social Council be issued for information rather than action and not be discussed in detail by the Executive Board, but rather by the Council. The report on support to the resident coordinator system could be included in the annual report of the Administrator. One delegation requested inclusion of information on follow-up to Council resolution 95/56.

37. Several delegations underlined the need for separate reports on the topic of evaluation, even if issued as addenda to annual reports of the Administrator or Executive Director. The holding of periodic briefings on strategic evaluations was another option. One speaker suggested that the discussion on management of change include the topic of further downsizing. One delegation requested an annual report on evaluations and accountability in addition to ad hoc reports and circulars on administrative actions taken. One delegation requested that in the annual report on evaluation and oversight, UNDP make specific comments on the actions it had taken on Board of Auditors, Joint Inspection Unit, Office of Internal Oversight Services, and internal audit/investigation reports and recommendations. Consequently, the Associate Administrator stated that UNDP would have an annual report on evaluation and oversight.

38. Specific comments concerning UNFPA related to defining one main theme for the UNFPA segment of the annual session 1997. Increasing South-South cooperation and greater emphasis on capacity development were topics that were mentioned as being important in addition to the ones already outlined by the Fund. One delegation stated that it was important to follow the core programme areas approved in Executive Board decision 95/15 when presenting issues to the Board.

39. In connection with the discussion on the work plan, one delegation emphasized the need for UNDP to cooperate with the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the World Trade Organization in the field of job creation.

40. In response to queries from delegations, the UNDP Assistant Administrator said he would not address each comment, but consider the discussion as part of an ongoing dialogue with the Executive Board. There would be more opportunities prior to the first regular session 1997 to hold informal discussions on the work plan with a view to presenting the final plan at the first regular session 1997, which would incorporate the comments made at the current session. Explanations would be provided in cases where comments could not be incorporated. He noted the general agreement and positive reaction to the priorities included in the work plan. Further refinement of the organization of the annual session would be undertaken. The volume of work would be examined, with a view to consolidating reports as much as possible. He agreed that the Board should function flexibly, with the ability to add new items and with a view to being responsive to both donor and programme country needs.

41. The Deputy Executive Director of UNFPA noted that the main focus of the UNFPA work plan 1997 was reproductive health and reproductive rights, in accordance with the three main priorities designated by the Executive Board. A comprehensive report on evaluation would be issued in 1998, therefore the Fund had not proposed one in 1997. It had been planned that major findings on evaluation would be included in the annual report of the Executive Director in 1997. He agreed with the need to remain flexible regarding the work plan, in order to reflect new programme issues and ones that could emerge. He also agreed that the Board should focus on strategic rather than operational issues.

42. The Executive Board took note of the outline of issues for 1997 (DP/1996/CRP.13) and the comments made thereon.

IV. MATTERS RELATING TO PROGRAMMING CYCLES: FOLLOW-UP TO EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION 95/26

43. The Associate Administrator introduced the report on the implementation of Executive Board decision 95/26 (DP/1996/27), concerning the financing of the independence bonus to eligible countries. He noted that the inclusion of Ukraine in footnote 1, which had been added by mistake, should be deleted. In its decision 95/26, the Board had granted the independence bonus to 15 eligible countries, with a sixteenth added subsequently. The first tranche of the independence bonus of $4.2 million had been released and the Administrator proposed that the remaining balance of $10.3 million in bonus amounts be released. The release of the remaining balance would ensure equal treatment in

line with past awards of the independence bonus and take into account Board decisions granting additional fifth cycle resources to some programme countries on an exceptional and one-time basis.

44. One delegation expressed gratitude for the report and noted the excellent cooperation between his country's Government and UNDP. The Resident Representative in his country had received national recognition in 1996. He proposed that the Executive Board discuss at a regular session in early 1997 the issue of the location of the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, suggesting that it could be located in Geneva or Vienna, closer to the countries of the region it covered.

45. The Executive Board took note of the report on the implementation of decision 95/26 (DP/1996/27).

V. UNDP: FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

46. The Administrator, in opening the discussion, underlined the key items to be considered: the harmonization of budget presentations among UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF; the proposed revised budget estimates for 1996-1997; the annual review of the financial situation, particularly the issue of the increased balance of general resources; and the management issues related to the Reserve for Field Accommodation. In addition, he introduced the proposed framework for enhancing accountability in UNDP. He also referred to the conference room paper (DP/1996/CRP.18) on the activities of the Office of United Nations System Support and Services (OUNS) in support of the resident coordinator system, as requested by the Executive Board in its decision 96/21. He indicated that the paper contained a description of UNDP work in follow-up to international conferences and the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa. He was confident that the limited investment authorized by the Executive Board for the establishment of OUNS had proven to be well justified. In conclusion, he expressed his personal assurance that the issues addressed by him were of utmost importance to UNDP and were receiving priority attention.

Annual review of the financial situation, 1995

47. In his opening remarks on the annual review of the financial situation, the Administrator addressed the issue of the increase in the balance of general resources, which had resulted from lower-than-expected core programme delivery. He explained that the contributing factors and the steps taken to improve the situation were described in detail in conference room paper DP/1996/CRP.19. He emphasized that the delivery situation was not generalized, as some 16 countries had accounted for most of the underdelivery. Cut-backs in fifth programming cycle resources, coupled with a one-year lag in the approval of the successor programming arrangements, had fostered a loss of programming momentum. Other factors included the adjustments needed to implement the programme approach, the increase in national execution, and the need to reorient activities to UNDP focus areas, emergencies and special situations.

48. He indicated that management actions had been taken to accelerate delivery and thereby reduce the balance of general resources over the next three years.

Those actions included borrowing and advanced programming under the new target for resource assignment from core (TRAC) system to ensure the necessary level of programme build-up; special programming missions; training and substantive support in the focus areas; and greater flexibility, decentralization, and simplification of procedures. The efforts were being bolstered by an ongoing change management process in UNDP.

49. He further explained that the actions had been taken based on the assumption that core resource contributions would be at least $3 billion over the 1997-1999 period. However, if that level of voluntary contribution was not reached, the accelerated pace of delivery would not only absorb the outstanding balance of resources, but would likely require UNDP to use its operational reserve and cut-back in programming levels, thereby disrupting the progress of planned and ongoing activities.

50. The Administrator, emphasizing the perpetual resource dilemma that UNDP faced of having to plan and programme project activities over several years, based on a system of annual voluntary contributions, provided his personal assurances of continuing to pay close attention to minimizing the balance of resources by maximizing delivery, without compromise to programme quality and focus. He urged the Executive Board to renew its commitment to secure an appropriate level of core resources for UNDP that would enable it to plan on the basis of assured contribution targets.

51. Following the introductory remarks of the Administrator, the Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Finance and Administration, introduced the report of the Administrator on the annual review of the financial situation, 1995 (DP/1996/28 and Add.1, 2 and 4).

52. With regard to the financial situation of UNDP, the Assistant Administrator reported that total income received by UNDP in 1995 from all sources had declined by $17.7 million from the previous year, including voluntary contributions, which had declined by 3 per cent. Total expenditure for 1995 had also declined as a result of a lower-than-anticipated level of programme delivery despite an increase in cost-sharing expenditure. He indicated that, as income had exceeded expenditures, a significant amount had been added to the balances of general resources and referred to the measures taken by the Administrator to accelerate delivery and reduce the current balance of resources.

53. The Assistant Administrator urged Executive Board members to view the financial situation of UNDP in the context of the organization's operational realities and resource prospects. He referred to the Administrator's proposal that the current level of the operational reserve be maintained, rather than reduced in compliance with the established formula. He emphasized that the primary purpose of the operational reserve was to guarantee the financial integrity of UNDP in the event of significant unexpected shortfalls in resources, uneven cash flow or other contingencies, and therefore, no obligations should exist against it.

54. Several delegations expressed concern about the high level of the balance of general resources in 1995 as well as about the rate of underdelivery, which

translated into programme countries not receiving the assistance they needed. Notwithstanding the rise in the balance of general resources, several delegations cautioned UNDP against sacrificing programme quality for the need to accelerate delivery.

55. Many speakers were concerned over the reduction in voluntary contributions, and noted that the $3.3 billion level of voluntary contributions established for the 1997-1999 programming period might not be reached. Noting that UNDP had forecasted a reduction in voluntary contributions to $3 billion for programming purposes, one delegation indicated that future contributions from its Government to UNDP were likely to be reduced as a result of changes in its overall foreign policy. Several delegations cautioned UNDP against using the $3.3 billion benchmark in its strategic planning as the target could be too optimistic. Some delegations, noting that UNDP had reduced its forecasted level of core contributions below the established target, urged members either to maintain or increase their contributions to UNDP core funds in order to reach the agreed target and allow UNDP to implement its new operational policies and make a smooth transition to the new programming cycle.

56. With reference to the draft decision on the annual review of the financial situation 1995, one delegation, speaking also on behalf of another delegation, expressed doubts as to whether it was efficient to include in one decision conflicting messages concerning the overall level of core resources and the build-up in the balance of general resources.

57. The Assistant Administrator, commenting on the interventions of the delegations, highlighted some statistics on the resource projections for 1996-1997, indicating a further expected erosion of the core resource base. The Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Resources and External Affairs, who was invited to comment further on the programme and delivery issues, stated that earlier projections of delivery levels should now be revised downwards from the original estimate of $560 to a maximum of $500 million for 1996. The Administrator, urging delegations not to overestimate the extent of the problem, expressed confidence that the actions taken would result in an appropriate build-up of the programme.

58. One delegation asked whether there was any benefit to the organization in suspending the application of the formula for the operational reserve calculation. The Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Finance and Administration, indicated that, given the income projections for planning purposes of $1 billion in core contributions for 1996, the level of the reserve should be maintained at the established 20 per cent of that level, even though the target may not in reality be met. In response to a question from a delegation regarding the increase in administrative budget expenditures from the previous year, he responded that, traditionally, the administrative budget expenditures in the second year of the biennium were higher. However, those expenditures were within the approved budget allotments for the whole of the biennium and therefore did not represent an increase in administrative expenditures.

59. Concerns were expressed in respect of the increase in the use of the trust fund modality and its impact on the level of core contributions. In response to

a request from a delegation, the Assistant Administrator agreed to undertake a study of none-core funding modalities, particularly trust funds, and to evaluate their impact on core contributions. Some delegations urged donor countries to consolidate their contributions to UNDP core funds rather than to contribute non-core funding through the use of the trust fund modality.

60. The Assistant Administrator referred to the Administrator's proposal for amendments to the UNDP Financial Regulations and Rules relating to resource mobilization from non-governmental sources and micro-capital grants. A number of delegations supported the proposed revisions, indicating that they represented a positive step towards the further utilization of national capacity in UNDP programmes and projects and explored new modalities in non-traditional funding sources. UNDP was encouraged by some delegations to continue its resource mobilization efforts, particularly with new donors and non-traditional sources of funding. One delegation expressed the view that changes to the Financial Regulations and Rules could be viewed in a broader policy perspective to be reviewed by the Executive Board at a future session. While agreeing with the statement made by the delegation, the Assistant Administrator indicated that in the case of micro-capital grants, the policy had already been approved by the Board and that only the increase in the level of the grant was being sought. In the case of contributions from non-governmental sources, he indicated that in order to expedite the approval of several programmes, the Administrator was proposing ex post facto review by the Board.

61. The Administrator emphasized that the proposed amendments aimed at attuning UNDP practices to those of other United Nations organizations that currently did not have limits set on the level of contributions they could receive from the private sector and other non-governmental sources. The Administrator also commented on the UNDP strategy for resource mobilization from new donors and expressed appreciation to donors in that category.

62. The Executive Board approved the following decisions:

96/44. Annual review of the financial situation, 1995

The Executive Board

1. Expresses concern over the reduction in voluntary contributions to core resources of the United Nations Development Programme and reiterates its calls on donors to increase their contributions in light of the estimated planning figures for contributions adopted by the Executive Board and encourages the Programme to continue working actively in order to secure a more predictable level of core resources;

2. Notes with concern the build-up in the balance of general resources of the United Nations Development Programme;

3. Also notes the measures taken by the Administrator to address the matter and urges the Administrator to continue the efforts to improve programme delivery, keeping in view the importance of maintaining and improving the quality of programming by the United Nations Development Programme;

4. Decides to continue the application of the agreed formula for determining the level of the Operational Reserve;

5. Requests the Administrator to present by January 1998 a comprehensive review of the whole modality of non-core resources from donor countries in relation to their financial management, focusing on their cost effect on core resources and also requests the Administrator, in this context, to pursue efforts to ensure the substantive alignment of all non-core resources with the mandate and areas of focus of the organization, as contained in decision 94/14, and to define the role of the Executive Board in this process.

13 September 1996

96/39. UNDP Financial Regulations and Rules

The Executive Board

1. Notes the intention of the Administrator to expand the resource base for programmable activities by seeking more aggressively resources from non-governmental sources, bearing in mind the neutral and apolitical nature of United Nations Development Programme cooperation;

2. Approves the changes to the Financial Regulations as proposed in paragraph 8 of addendum 4 of the report of the Administrator on the annual review of the financial situation, 1995 (DP/1996/28/Add.4);

3. Requests the Administrator to keep the Executive Board regularly apprised of the status of the resource mobilization initiatives from non-governmental sources and to present the detailed policy of the United Nations Development Programme in this matter within the context of the comprehensive review of the whole modality of non-core resources for discussion at the first regular session 1998 in accordance with Executive Board decision 96/44;

4. Further requests the Administrator to implement the resource mobilization initiatives in accordance with the sustainable human development framework, contained in decision 94/14, and consistent with national development priorities;

5. Approves the changes to Financial Regulation 2.2 M (i), as proposed in paragraph 12 of addendum 4 of the report of the Administrator on the annual review of the financial situation, 1995 (DP/1996/28/Add.4).

13 September 1996

Reserve for Field Accommodation

63. In his opening remarks, the Administrator made reference to the informal meetings of the Executive Board at which the Assistant Administrator of the Bureau for Finance and Administration (BFA) had made a comprehensive

presentation of the serious issues involved and the management actions taken to correct the situation relating to the Reserve for Field Accommodation (RFA) and had answered questions that Executive Board members had on the matter.

64. The Administrator reassured the Executive Board that extraordinary efforts had been made to identify and deal with the problems and that the situation was under control. Recognizing the serious implications resulting from the breakdown in internal controls and management oversight that had occurred, he expressed his satisfaction that all the right actions had been and were being taken to correct the management and control problems. He assured the Board that it was an isolated incident.

65. The Administrator further indicated that an investigation into the accountability issues was under way and would be completed, with inclusion of the resultant management actions, by the end of 1996. A special advisory committee had been established to review the findings of the investigation and make recommendations with regard to the responsibility of any staff member.

66. The Assistant Administrator and Director of BFA introduced the report of the Administrator on the Reserve for Field Accommodation (DP/1996/28/Add.3) and recalled that the balance of the Reserve was significantly above the authorized level. He referred to his explanation at the third regular session 1995 regarding the management actions that UNDP had initiated to improve the management of the Reserve and to deal with the excessive balance. He indicated that during the review, and in consultation with the Board of Auditors, a number of serious management weaknesses and a breakdown of internal controls had been identified. He further indicated that a four-step strategy to deal with the situation was being implemented, which included: first, the tightening of management and financial controls in order to ensure that the situation remained an isolated incident; second, an asset-verification process; third, a more transparent presentation of the activities of the Reserve by revising its accounting treatment in the 1995 financial statements from a net to a gross basis; and lastly, an investigation into the activities of the Reserve undertaken by the Division for Audit and Management Review (DAMR), which had included a review of the actions taken by staff and contracted parties. The findings of the DAMR review would be presented to a special advisory committee established to make recommendations on accountability aspects.

67. While regretting the nature of the information being brought to the Executive Board, the Assistant Administrator provided his assurances and commitment to bringing the matter to closure by pursuing all possible avenues of action. He requested the Board to endorse the proposals contained in the report in order to enable UNDP to continue to resolve the situation and revert to the Board at its first regular session 1997 with a more complete proposal for future activities of the RFA.

68. The Assistant Administrator introduced the Director, External Audit, United Kingdom, a representative of the United Nations Board of Auditors, who had been invited, at the request of Executive Board members, to be present at the Board session during the deliberations on the item. He also referred to the advance copy of the report of the United Nations Board of Auditors for the biennium

1994-1995, which had been distributed to Executive Board members and which referred to the RFA.

69. Several delegations commended UNDP on the forthcoming, frank and transparent disclosure of the problem and expressed their appreciation to the Administrator and the Assistant Administrator. Various delegations were concerned at the serious breakdown in internal controls and supervision of staff, which they hoped would be addressed in the context of the change management project. Some delegations supported the proposals of the Administrator contained in his report, in particular with regard to the revised accounting treatment of the Reserve, which allowed for separating common premises and housing in UNDP financial statements. Delegations agreed to review the matter further at the first regular session of the Executive Board in 1997. One delegation indicated that, while acknowledging the need for UNDP to construct premises under difficult conditions, construction should be carried out in rare and exceptional cases. Another delegation circulated a draft decision.

70. One delegation, expressing concern about the management of the Reserve during the previous three years, inquired whether those issues could have been brought to closure earlier and whether the Executive Board should take a stronger oversight role if UNDP management did not act conclusively and promptly. In response the Assistant Administrator indicated that circumstances had been explained in detail during his presentation at the informal session as summarized in document DP/1996/CRP.15 and that action had been taken as soon as the problems had been clearly identified. He clarified that the proposals to revise the accounting treatment were intended to provide increased transparency regarding the income and expenditures under the Reserve.

71. One delegation noted that the report of the Board of Auditors for the biennium ended 31 December 1993 had included recommendations on improving the reviewing and recording of obligations and the definition of unliquidated obligations. That delegation also noted that the draft report of the Board of Auditors for the biennium ended 31 December 1995 indicated that UNDP had not completed action on improving internal controls, country office reporting, and the review and recording of unliquidated obligations in particular and obligations in general.

72. The Director, External Audit, a representative of the United Nations Board of Auditors, in response to a query, indicated that the investigation into the overexpenditure on contracts was still ongoing. However, from the records available to the Auditors, there was no clear explanation of the nature of the overexpenditure. A possible explanation could be an underestimation by the architect of the construction requirements. Regarding a question on the policy of UNDP to dispose of properties, the Director acknowledged the intention on the part of UNDP not to maintain properties beyond essential needs. He also expressed his satisfaction at the proposals of UNDP regarding the accounting treatment of the Reserve.

73. The Director indicated that the general concerns of the Board of Auditors on the management of the Reserve related mainly to the breach in the level authorized by the Executive Board, the level of the possible overpayments, and

the significant gaps in the processes of certifying, approving, establishing obligations, and contracting. In that connection, the Director welcomed the prompt corrective actions taken by UNDP as soon as the warning signals had become apparent. He was also pleased with the investigation initiated by DAMR as well as with the changes introduced in the payment and selection process, the establishment of obligations, and the fact that post facto approval from the Contracts Committee would be sought.

74. One delegation expressed concern that UNDP had not implemented the recommendations from the report of the Board of Auditors for the biennium ended 31 December 1993, which addressed weaknesses in internal controls and financial accounting.

75. The Executive Board approved the following decision:

96/40. Management, accountability and the Reserve for Field Accommodation

The Executive Board

1. Welcomes the report contained in document DP/1996/28/Add.3 and the additional information provided to the Executive Board by the Administrator and the United Nations Board of Auditors, as well as the transparent and forthcoming manner in which information on the Reserve for Field Accommodation has been provided;

2. Notes with grave concern the failure of management oversight and control relating to the proper application of the Financial Regulations and Rules and the supervision of staff and contracted parties that have contributed to the problems outlined in document DP/1996/28/Add.3, concerning the Reserve for Field Accommodation;

3. Welcomes in this context the investigations, reviews and actions initiated so far by the United Nations Development Programme to strengthen financial and management control of the Reserve for Field Accommodation;

4. Requests the Administrator to take all necessary steps to ensure compliance with all Financial Regulations and Rules, including additional efforts in the area of training of staff in financial management and oversight;

5. Further requests the Administrator to address any structural or systemic problems relating to financial control and management supervision that have come to light as part of the investigation of the Reserve for Field Accommodation as soon as possible in order to ensure that this remains an isolated incident;

6. Urges the Administrator to finalize the investigation on the management of the Reserve for Field Accommodation as soon as possible and to ensure that within the framework of accountability, responsibility is assigned at the individual level;

7. Endorses the revised accounting treatment for the Reserve for Field Accommodation and notes with concern that the overcommitment and overexpenditure will reach a level of $62.8 million by 31 December 1996;

8. Approves the proposal of the Administrator that the activities under the Reserve for Field Accommodation in the future cover only housing premises and that office premises be handled separately, bearing in mind the need to enhance transparency of the activities covered by the Reserve for Field Accommodation and those relating to office premises;

9. Reaffirms, in the context of the housing premises, the principle that, where possible, UNDP should dispose of housing units it either owns or operates under government ownership and that any future housing requirements be met together with the host country Government;

10. Requests the Administrator, in collaboration with the Joint Consultative Group on Policy partners, in the context of the implementation of paragraph 44 of General Assembly resolution 50/120 on common premises, to address and find a common understanding of how to deal with outstanding contributions as well as cost-sharing, payment and ownership relating to future constructions;

11. Further requests the Administrator to report on the implementation of the present decision at the first regular session 1997.

13 September 1996

76. One observer delegation, in supporting the decision adopted by the Executive Board on the item, expressed its view that all initiatives taken with respect to the RFA should be made with increased coordination both at the country and headquarters levels, with the involvement of the resident coordinators concerned. The delegation considered that the problems encountered in the case, if not properly addressed, could damage the credibility and pertinence of reform proposals regarding organizations in the United Nations system.

77. In response, the Administrator, while expressing his indignation regarding the matter, appreciated the findings of the United Nations Board of Auditors that there had been a prompt and sound response as soon as the information on the situation had become available. He provided his assurances that appropriate action would be taken on his part as soon as the report of the Division for Audit and Management Review was completed, by the end of 1996. He later expressed his appreciation to the Assistant Administrator, BFA, and his team, for the initiatives and corrective actions taken.

Revised budget estimates for the biennium 1996-1997

78. In introducing the revised budget estimates for the biennium 1996-1997 (DP/1996/29), the Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Finance and Administration stated that the revised budget estimates for the biennium 1996-1997 amounted to a slight net increase of $2.3 million or 0.4 per cent.

The net adjustment, he indicated, comprised downward cost adjustments amounting to $0.1 million, which were mainly the result of exchange rate fluctuations, as well as revised estimates for inflation and other cost factors, and a volume adjustment of $2.4 million relating to the proposal to establish a country office in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Assistant Administrator then stated that with respect to the downsizing in connection with the 1996-1997 budget strategy, the organization continued to believe that the right decision had been taken. He stated that, taking into account the current change process, the impact on the organizational capacity would be kept under continuous review. He then reported on issues related to the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) staffing formula, the reserves for separations and transitional measures, the reclassification of posts between biennial budget submissions, and the Office of United Nations System Support and Services (OUNS).

79. One delegation expressed concern that UNDP had proposed increasing the 1996-1997 budget estimates. The delegation inquired whether UNDP had contingency plans in case income was less than expected. The Assistant Administrator responded that in formulating the 1996-1997 budget proposal, UNDP had taken into account the possible level of resources and that the overall issue of a contingency plan in case of a resource shortfall would be addressed on a continuing basis as an integral part of the new resource allocation system.

80. One delegation expressed concern that certain regions were significantly short of meeting the established targets of host country contributions to local office costs. That delegation also expressed concern that host countries in certain regions were expected to contribute only a small portion of the local office costs.

81. Some delegations, noting the current tight resource environment for multilateral development, supported the position of the Advisory Committee for Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) that the additional requirements for the establishment of the country office in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the revised 1996-1997 budget, should have been absorbed within currently appropriated budgetary resources. The Assistant Administrator indicated that in this context it should be borne in mind that UNDP has just implemented three consecutive budget reduction strategies, and that UNDP continued to aim at maximizing its resources available for programme purposes.

82. Many delegations supported the establishment of a country office in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with one delegation, while supporting the establishment of the country office, requesting that it should not reduce the resources currently available to the region.

83. One delegation, noting that in the Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States region, only 8 out of 30 countries had deputy resident representatives, requested that the matter be addressed in the context of the 1998-1999 biennial budget.

84. One delegation supported the position of ACABQ on the need to reassess the staffing formula as applied to UNV.

85. Many delegations, while supporting in general the proposals for contributions by host governments towards local office costs (GLOC), requested additional information regarding the financial impact of the proposals, in particular the financial impact of applying the revised programme thresholds for providing international staff to some net contributor countries (NCCs), and the impact of the three-year waiver period following graduation. One delegation stated that by applying the proposed new waiver bands, the poverty focus of the organization would be reduced, and therefore preferred to review the subject of country office costs in the context of the 1998-1999 biennial budget. Another delegation, in response, stated that the proposed new waiver bands were the same as those agreed by the Executive Board in its decision 95/23 on successor programming arrangements, which focused on poverty eradication, and that its application for GLOC represented policy and administrative rationales. The same delegation, for the same reasons, did not support the position of ACABQ that the length of the waiver period following graduation be reduced. In addition, the same delegation cited the Administrator's comment in an earlier agenda item, that large cost-sharing programmes in certain countries with small UNDP core programme resources were indeed relevant in the overall sustainable human development framework as developed by UNDP. The Chief of Budget indicated that if the proposed waiver bands were applied, the income through GLOC would increase by an estimated $2.6 million per year, and that the additional cost to UNDP for providing international staff to some NCCs in applying the revised programme thresholds would be an estimated $300,000 per year. He indicated that additional information would be provided bilaterally.

86. With respect to the reserve for separations, one delegation requested information on the overall reduction in UNDP core salary costs following the separations in the context of the 1996-1997 budget. The Chief of Budget indicated that there would be an estimated decrease in real terms of $19.0 million in salary costs compared to the previous biennium.

87. Delegations were supportive of the proposal on the reclassification of posts between biennial budgets, on the basis that it was cost-neutral and that full reporting was provided on the number and reclassifications effected.

88. Referring to the Office of United Nations System Support and Services, many delegations were supportive of the role of the office and the crucial work it was carrying out. Many delegations, while appreciating the support being given by other United Nations system organizations towards OUNS, supported the ACABQ position that such support was not sufficient and that the Administrator should redouble his effort to obtain more support from other units of the United Nations system. One delegation proposed the budgetary approval for OUNS continue on a provisional basis and supported the ACABQ position that it should be financed from the regular budget of the United Nations. Some delegations did not agree with the financing of OUNS from the regular budget of the United Nations. One delegation stated that, based on the operations of OUNS to date, the Office had proved to be a crucial support to the resident coordinator system and therefore should be placed on a firmer footing. The Administrator stated that support was being provided from other units of the United Nations system, such as candidates of high calibre for resident coordinator positions. On the financing of OUNS from the regular budget of the United Nations, he stated that there were no real resources to pursue, but that he would continue to seek such

financial support from other units of the United Nations system, and looked forward to the regularization of OUNS by the Executive Board.

89. The Executive Board approved the following decision:

96/41. Revised budget estimate for the biennium 1996-1997

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the comments made by delegations during the Board discussions on the revised budget estimates for the biennium 1996-1997 and of the report of the Advisory Committee for Administrative and Budgetary Questions (DP/1996/30);

2. Approves with respect to the revised budget estimates for the 1996-1997 biennium of the United Nations Development Programme and the funds administered by the Programme, contained in document DP/1996/29, a revised appropriation in the amount of $579,146,800 gross, to be allocated from the resources indicated in the table below, to finance the revised 1996-1997 biennial budget and resolves that the income estimates in the amount of $38,000,000 shall be used to offset the gross appropriation, resulting in a net appropriation of $541,146,800;

3. Also approves the proposals of the Administrator contained in paragraphs 3 and 4 of document DP/1996/29 relating to the establishment of a country office in Bosnia and Herzegovina;

4. Requests the Administrator, in the context of continuous reporting on the progress of the management of change process, to present to the Board at its second regular session 1997, an outline of the overall strategy for the budget for the biennium 1998-1999, taking into account the importance of the organizational capacity of the United Nations Development Programme, in particular the adequacy of human resources both at headquarters and country levels, for the effective support of its programme;

5. Approves the proposals of the Administrator contained in paragraphs 14 to 21 of document DP/1996/29, relating to the principles and criteria that will be used to determine the amounts to be reimbursed by host Governments as contributors towards local office costs;

6. Takes note of the reports of the Administrator on: (a) the use and status of the reserves that were established for staff separations and transitional measures; (b) pilot arrangements relating to reclassification; (c) the Office of United Nations System Support and Services; and (d) the deferment of the application of the staffing formula applied to the United Nations Volunteers;

7. Urges the Administrator to redouble his efforts to obtain more support for the Office of United Nations System Support and Services while expecting full cooperation from other bodies of the United Nations system, and to keep the Board informed of the progress made in gathering such support;

8. Requests the Administrator to bring paragraph 7 of the present decision to the attention of the United Nations funds and programmes, specialized agencies, and the Secretariat;

9. Authorizes the Administrator to maintain an accounting linkage between voluntary contributions and contributions to local office costs in such a manner that contributions are first applied against obligations towards local office costs;

10. Stresses the need for programme countries to meet in full their obligations towards the local office costs of the United Nations Development Programme;

11. Decides that in the case of countries with 1994 per capita gross national product of $4,701 and above:

(a) Where programme activities of the United Nations Development Programme exceed $12 million financed from all sources of financing over a three-year period, a resident representative and a second international staff member could be provided from the biennial budget of the Programme;

(b) Where programme activities of the United Nations Development Programme exceed $8 million financed from all sources of financing over a three-year period, a resident representative could be provided from the biennial budget of the Programme;

12. Decides that, in line with similar provisions of decision 95/23, countries exceeding the threshold of $4,701 per capita gross national product shall continue to be granted waivers for a period of three years, following the year of graduation;

13. Authorizes the Administrator to implement reclassification in the P-1 to P-5 range, provided that the aggregate effect of the changes in the classified level of posts is subject to a zero-sum limitation;

14. Decides to keep the issue of local office costs under review in the context of the budget for the biennium 1998-1999.

UNDP revised budget proposals for the 1996-1997 biennium, showing estimated extrabudgetary income from external sources

(Thousands of United States dollars)

	Appropriation estimates	Estimated extrabudgetary income	Total gross/net estimates
I. RESOURCES OF UNDP			
A. UNDP core activities[a]			
Headquarters[b]	144 321.0	36 479.4	180 800.4
Country offices	232 507.2	45 267.5	277 774.7
Gross UNDP core activities	376 828.2	81 746.9	458 575.1
Estimated income	38 000.0	0.0	38 000.0
Net UNDP core activities	338 828.2	81 746.9	420 575.1
B. Programme support and development activities			
Programme development activities	30 828.7	0.0	30 828.7
Support to the operational activities of the United Nations	96 556.3	0.0	96 556.3
Project/programme implementation services			
DSS	7 223.4	0.0	7 223.4
IAPSO	4 446.9	3 911.4	8 358.3
UNV	34 407.7	2 999.7	37 407.4
National execution	3 875.3	0.0	3 875.3
Total project/programme implementation services	49 953.3	6 911.1	56 864.4
Programme support	2 300.0	0.0	2 300.0
Total programme support and development activities	179 638.3	6 911.1	186 549.4
C. Total resources of UNDP			
Gross resources	556 466.5	88 658.0	645 124.5
Estimated income	38 000.0	0.0	38 000.0
Net resources	518 466.5	88 658.0	607 124.5
II. RESOURCES OF FUNDS			
A. UNCDF	9 207.8	0.0	9 207.8
B. UNRFNRE and UNFSTD	1 147.2	324.8	1 472.0
C. UNSO	7 030.6	1 207.3	8 237.9
D. UNIFEM	5 294.7	310.1	5 604.8
Total resources of Funds	22 680.3	1 842.2	24 522.5
III. TOTAL UNDP APPROPRIATIONS			
Gross appropriations	579 146.8	90 500.2	669 647.0
Estimated income	38 000.0	0.0	38 000.0
Net UNDP appropriations	541 146.8	90 500.2	631 647.0

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[a] The Administrator is permitted to redeploy between the country offices and headquarters appropriation lines up to a maximum of 5 per cent.

[b] Extrabudgetary income represents income from external sources, exclusive of reimbursements from non-core units; these are included in the appropriation estimates of the non-core units.

13 September 1996

Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office

90. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Finance and Administration introduced the first biennial report on the activities of the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office (IAPSO) (DP/1996/31 and Corr.1), which had been requested in Executive Board decision 96/2. The report highlighted results achieved since 1994 and planned future activities as well as an overview of procurement statistics for operational activities of the United Nations system, including UNDP. A statistical report on procurement was also distributed. It was noted that global procurement reported by the United Nations system for 1994 and 1995 amounted to some $3.7 billion for each year, with UNDP-funded procurement increasing from $228 million in 1994 to $303 million in 1995. Procurement from developing countries was about one third for the whole United Nations system and 60 per cent for UNDP funded procurement.

91. The Assistant Administrator also commented on procurement services provided by IAPSO to development partners, noting in particular the significant increase in assistance to the Governments of programme countries. In the future, IAPSO would continue to support United Nations agencies and UNDP country offices in the effective handling of the procurement process, and in improving the prospects of United Nations procurement from local suppliers. It would also continue to strive towards rationalizing procurement functions by promoting coordination, transparency, wider competition for contracts and economic efficiency, thereby contributing to strengthening confidence in the capacity of the United Nations system to ensure best value for money in its operations.

92. Several delegations posed questions to the secretariat. One asked if IAPSO has been consulted on the initiative by UNFPA to have precautionary stocks of contraceptives, as legislated by Executive Board decision 95/36. Another speaker asked if other United Nations bodies were able to use the United Nations Supplier Database (UNSD), the common vendor roster developed by IAPSO. That delegation also expressed some concern that IAPSO was concentrating too much on procurement and not enough on assistance to creating capacity in procurement in developing countries, which was a very important factor. Another delegation sought more information on how environmental concerns mentioned in the document would be taken into account in procurement activities, which he hoped would not disadvantage supply sources in developing countries. A question was also raised about the reference in the document to what constituted underutilized major donor countries. One delegation praised the trend of increased percentage of procurement from developing countries.

93. The Assistant Administrator noted that while IAPSO provided technical support such as procurement training services to developing countries, it did not have a clear role in capacity-building in procurement as it was primarily a research and development entity.

94. The Director of IAPSO stated that information about the capabilities and services of the Office had been provided to UNFPA. However, no particular discussions had taken place with regard to the issue of procurement of contraceptives. He referred to the new expanded facilities available in Copenhagen, which were shared by IAPSO and the United Nations Office for Project Services. He explained that UNSD, which was built on supplier information

provided by agencies, was used by many organizations for comparison purposes, as large procurement agencies had their own rosters. The database was distributed to all UNDP country offices and would soon be available through the Internet. He explained that IAPSO was concerned with environmental standards in procurement mainly to ensure that only an acceptable quality of goods from supply sources in industrialized countries were provided to developing countries. He believed that a number of manufacturers in developing countries would increasingly be in a position to meet acceptable environmental standards. He further indicated that IAPSO had started a "green office programme" in several duty stations and headquarters locations for the procurement of environmentally appropriate office supplies and equipment. With reference to underutilized major donor countries, he explained that the designation was determined in relation to the level of overall funding of a donor country compared with the return flow in procurement terms.

95. The Executive Board approved the following decision:

96/35. Activities of the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the Administrator on the activities of the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office in 1994 and 1995, and the contribution by the Office to the coordination of procurement activities, improved transparency in operations and promotion of competition for contracts within the United Nations system;

2. Takes note of the 1995 Annual Statistical Report on procurement by the United Nations system, and welcomes the consolidated reporting of such data;

3. Recommends that the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office continue to explore ways to enter into arrangements for coordinated procurement with United Nations entities, drawing on the respective strengths of each entity.

10 September 1996

Cost segments at UNDP headquarters

96. One delegation, speaking for itself and on behalf of eleven others, referred to the note by the Administrator on the follow-up to the report on the annual session regarding cost segments at headquarters, contained in document DP/1996/37. The continuous scarcity of resources, as evidenced by the expected decline of 8.9 per cent in UNDP voluntary contributions during the period 1996-1997, made it imperative to keep costs under continuously tight control. The delegations appreciated the information provided by UNDP on the various cost segments at headquarters. It was thought, however, that it would be useful to receive a more analytical description of the evolution of actual costs at headquarters, especially as they related to UNDP programme expenditures. That information would enable the Executive Board to assess changes more effectively in that cost segment over time. It would also enable the Board to compare UNDP

headquarters costs with those of other United Nations organizations based in New York and elsewhere. The Administrator was requested to provide a short paper containing those elements for consideration at the first regular session 1997.

VI. UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR PROJECT SERVICES

Revised budget estimates for the biennium 1996-1997

97. The Executive Director, United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), introduced his report on revised budget estimates for the biennium 1996-1997 for the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) (DP/1996/36). He noted that the revised estimates showed an increase of $4 million; however, $3.5 million of the increase had the result of a change in accounting treatment of the payments made to UNDP country offices for services to projects provided by them on behalf of UNOPS. The payments had previously been accounted for as a reduction of income and were consequently not reported either as income or expenditure. To improve the transparency of accounting and reporting systems as mandated in decision 94/12, such payments would henceforth be recorded as part of the total payments made to UNDP for services provided by UNDP to UNOPS. That approach had been supported both by the United Nations Board of Auditors and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and had been used as the basis for UNOPS financial statements for the 1994-1995 biennium.

98. The Executive Director also noted that interest income on accumulated unspent income, previously unavailable separately for OPS, was now included in the UNOPS revised budget estimates and was projected at $1.4 million for the biennium. He also pointed out that information on the relocation of the Division for Procurement Projects (PRP) to Copenhagen and the Rehabilitation and Social Sustainability Unit (RESS) to Geneva had been provided to ACABQ and all questions responded to. UNOPS would fully disclose all relevant information on contributions and associated expenditures in the UNOPS financial statements for the current and future years.

99. Observing that UNOPS had, in its first year of operation as a separate entity, succeeded in recovering the cost of providing its services, the Executive Director highlighted with appreciation the efforts and sacrifices of UNOPS staff in achieving that goal. He also pointed out that the budget document currently before the Executive Board would be the last one prepared by Mr. Nestor Marmanillo, Assistant Director, Division for Finance and Administration, and stated that the accuracy and transparency of the forecasts for many years had been due to Mr. Marmanillo's diligence and acuity and wished him a long and rewarding retirement.

100. The Executive Director noted that the improvement in project portfolio continued, with peak project budget projections having been revised upward to $1.3 billion for the end of 1996 and 1997. Performance through August 1996 indicated that the revised projection was likely to be achieved or exceeded.

101. Finally, the Executive Board was informed that copies of the UNOPS 1996 Business Plan, previously provided to delegations that had requested it, were

being made available at the current session for any other interested delegations.

102. Four delegations expressed their approval of the continuing demonstration of the validity of the self-financing principle. One delegation expressed satisfaction with the amount of resources being allocated for internal audit and saw this as a positive link to the accountability concept discussed in the preceding session. Several delegations expressed their support for the separate disclosure of payments for services to country offices and the transparency resulting therefrom. One delegation inquired whether the anticipated computer purchases referred to in paragraph 15 of the ACABQ report were the same items referred to in paragraph 2 of the revised budget estimates. Another referred to paragraph 9 of the ACABQ report and requested details of the criteria for UNOPS handling personnel matters itself as compared to utilizing the services of UNDP, also querying the usage of the activities of limited duration (ALD) modality. One delegation, mentioning that it had in the past complained of a lack of transparency in UNOPS reporting, noted that it had found in the UNOPS Business Plan the kind of clarity it had been seeking and encouraged UNOPS to continue the practice of distributing the document to the Executive Board.

Response by the Executive Director

103. The Executive Director thanked those delegations that had offered positive comments. He responded to the matter of the usage of the ALD modality by pointing out that perhaps 75 per cent of administrative expenditures were directly or indirectly related to personnel costs and that ALDs were a tool with which UNOPS could react in a cost-effective manner to changes in demand for its services, i.e., it could hire easily when demand increased and lay off when requirements declined; in addition, there were advantages in terms of simplified administration. He explained that the criteria for performing personnel services in-house compared to using UNDP central services were effectiveness on cost and on service level dimensions, noting that UNOPS already processed as many as 7,000 personnel contract actions of different types in any given year. He confirmed that the computer purchases mentioned in paragraph 15 of the ACABQ report and paragraph 2 of the revised budget estimates were the same items.

104. The Executive Board approved the following decision:

96/37. Revised budget estimates for the biennium 1996-1997 of the United Nations Office for Project Services

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the Executive Director on the revised budget estimates for the biennium 1996-1997 (DP/1996/36);

2. Takes note of the changes in financial reporting procedures that have been introduced with effect from the 1996-1997 biennium; and

3. Approves the revised budget estimates for the 1996-1997 biennium in the amount of $65,444,000.

11 September 1996

VII. UNDP: COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS

Introduction

105. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific introduced the first country cooperation frameworks (CCF) for the People's Republic of China (1996-2000) (DP/CCF/CPR/1) and Viet Nam (1997-2000) (DP/CCF/VIE/1). He noted the enormous progress achieved by the People's Republic of China since the launching of the UNDP programme in 1978. Viet Nam had also shown impressive economic indicators in recent years. The CCFs had been developed prior to the preparation of guidelines on the successor programming arrangements, yet both Governments had succeeded in preparing frameworks that were in line with Executive Board mandates. They reflected a major transformation in the role of UNDP, in particular with its focus on poverty eradication. UNDP played a major role in technical cooperation, aid coordination and in support to the follow-up of major United Nations conferences. The frameworks had been developed through a long process of consultation with all relevant ministries as well as civil society organizations, academia, the United Nations system, bilateral aid organizations, and with reference to the mid-term review process and joint issues papers. The Government of Viet Nam had developed a country strategy note, on which the CCF was based, that underlined sustainable development as the ultimate goal of United Nations cooperation. He noted that an Executive Board mission had visited the People's Republic of China in February 1996. He also commented on some of the points highlighted in the CCFs for UNDP cooperation the aim of which was to reinforce the shift to an effective sustainable human development (SHD) orientation: poverty eradication as the first priority; gender in development; capacity-building; the programme approach and resource mobilization.

General comments

106. Many delegations cited the high quality and valuable content of the two CCFs. Both gave an excellent overview of the nature of UNDP cooperation in the countries. It was noted that the format of the new CCFs was user-friendly and an improvement over that of the former UNDP country programmes. It enabled the Executive Board to have a more substantive discussion on activities in programme countries. There was also a clearer link between UNDP interventions and national priorities. Some delegations commented that the section on results could still be improved, with the possible inclusion of evaluation findings.

Country cooperation framework for the People's Republic of China

107. Many speakers praised the excellence of the CCF for the People's Republic of China. The framework effectively covered the complexity of problems that UNDP would address during the coming five years and demonstrated greater focus on SHD and in particular, on poverty eradication. However, the relatively large

number of interventions in many sectors described in the document could be reduced and the comparative advantages of UNDP identified. Information on the contributions of other donors could be included. Some delegations emphasized a stronger role for UNDP in aid coordination with a view to eliminating duplication. One speaker requested that UNDP capacity-building interventions be participatory and asked that a reference to "people's empowerment" be included in the section on poverty eradication.

108. Areas that could be given more emphasis in the framework were gender in development, private sector participation, urban poverty, and governance. Greater elaboration on the role of national execution could also be included. Some delegations asked for more information regarding the nature of collaboration between UNDP and the Bretton Woods institutions, and requested that steps be taken to avoid duplication of effort, particularly in macroeconomic reform. One delegation requested information on cooperation within the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in China and how financial support of GEF projects and their design was incorporated in the framework. A query was raised about interventions in the field of science and technology. Several speakers suggested that the sections on results and lessons learned could be improved, with inclusion of criteria for success. Monitoring and review was a key area that was needed to ensure accurate and timely information on an ongoing basis.

109. One delegation noted positively the UNDP interventions in energy, environment and health programmes. One speaker stressed the importance of information sharing and requested that some reference be included on networking.

110. The Assistant Administrator thanked delegations for their supportive remarks. He noted that while 63 projects might seem a high number, the CCF in fact represented a reduction of 43 per cent in the number of projects as compared with the third country programme. It was stated in the CCF that priority was given to gender in development in all five SHD thematic areas, hence in virtually all projects. He drew attention to four projects that were specifically on gender-related issues in the key areas of education, environment and employment, and involved civil society. He pointed out that UNDP drew upon science and technology to apply to SHD and the reduction of poverty. He also stated that coordination would be increased.

111. The Chief of the Country Offices Support Division of the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific stated that poverty eradication was cross-cutting and thus needed to include interventions in a range of sectors. For example, in western China it was important to support activities in health, education and agriculture, in line with the Government's programmes, as a mean of helping to eradicate poverty. With regard to impact, he noted that several comprehensive documents such as the joint issues paper contained information on lessons learned and the CCF itself referred to the establishment of benchmark surveys and reviews. In response to the question posed, he noted that the work of UNDP and the Bretton Woods institutions in macroeconomic reform was not duplicative as UNDP was involved primarily in capacity-building and training, while the Bretton Woods institutions provided direct support. In response to a query, he stated that activities in enterprise reform were focused on the creation of an enabling environment, policy and legislation in order to enable State

enterprises to operate in a more effective manner. With regard to urban poverty, he cited paragraph 20 (a) and (b) of the document, which contained a description of a UNDP intervention that would affect 57 small towns. He noted that the cooperation between China and UNDP had been built over an extended period of time and while there were still many projects, the interventions were well targeted and likely to have a large impact.

112. The Deputy Director of the Office of the Administrator, who had served previously in the UNDP Country Offices in China and Viet Nam, responded that UNDP had played a lead role in advocating public and legal reforms and had worked in close cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions and the Governments. He stressed that the effective collaboration with the Bretton Wood institutions in the countries was due to the resident representatives and field representatives of the institutions.

113. The representative of the People's Republic of China expressed her Government's gratitude for the support to the first CCF. She emphasized the country's large population and need for development in her country. The comparative advantages of UNDP had been examined in formulating the CCF. Her Government recognized that UNDP funds were limited while demand was enormous. Efforts had been made to reduce the former focus areas as much as possible. The framework was a key instrument in promoting economic development and enhancing people's livelihoods.

114. The Executive Board approved the first country cooperation framework for the People's Republic of China (DP/CCF/CPR/1).

Country cooperation framework for Viet Nam

115. Many delegations praised the CCF for Viet Nam as an excellent plan. A high degree of policy consensus among development partners was noted. The framework, whose priorities received wide support from speakers, was seen to be in line with bilateral economic cooperation programmes. It demonstrated the important role and comparative advantage of UNDP and underlined the process of renewal and renovation in the country.

116. Most speakers praised the role of UNDP in aid coordination in the country, particularly with regard to resource mobilization. Support was also expressed for the interventions of UNDP in economic, legal and public administration reform. The importance of addressing the needs of the urban poor was underlined by one speaker.

117. Membership in the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) would bolster the technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) component of the framework. One delegation requested that the UNDP Special Unit for TCDC and the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific use the experiences of ASEAN countries in appropriate ways to promote economic development in Viet Nam. That delegation also announced its intention to contribute financially to the promotion of subregional South-South cooperation.

118. Several delegations sought further clarification of the respective roles of UNDP and the Bretton Woods institutions in Viet Nam. One speaker asked that

UNDP place less emphasis on social development and environment/natural resources, areas on which other organizations could concentrate and avoid interventions in micro-credits and food security where it did not have a comparative advantage. More information was sought on follow-up and evaluation, and on Government participation in the programme.

119. The Assistant Administrator responded that reform was a central priority of the framework. He thanked the Government of Japan for its announced contribution to TCDC as well as to the Indo-China Human Development Initiative, and agreed that the funds would be used to help promote the integration of Viet Nam in ASEAN and Mekong activities.

120. The Deputy Director of the Office of the Administrator cited the role played by UNDP with its development partners in preparing the first international donors conference for Viet Nam. UNDP continued to participate in the annual World Bank Consultative Group meetings, with special responsibility for capacity-building issues. There was active collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions in Viet Nam, with a public expenditure review as a recent example.

121. The representative of Viet Nam thanked UNDP for all the work done in connection with the CCF, which had resulted from intensive consultations at the country office and headquarters. The target objectives matched the priorities of UNDP and the Government and the CCF was in accordance with the priorities of the Government for the United Nations system as a whole. The Government of Viet Nam was committed to assuring that all UNDP and other United Nations programmes were implemented in the best possible manner. She noted that in 1997 there would be an overall review of 20 years of cooperation with United Nations organizations with a view to identifying the best means of implementing the various programmes.

122. The Executive Board approved the first country cooperation framework for Viet Nam (DP/CCF/VIE/1).

Global cooperation framework

123. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Programme and Policy Support introduced the global cooperation framework (DP/GCF/GLO/1). He underlined the aim of the framework, which was to provide substantive capacity in the main UNDP focus areas emphasizing clarity and coherence. He noted that resources were allocated according to the five broad categories and six principal types of activities mentioned in the report. He also drew the attention of the Executive Board to the prioritization of poverty eradication, the continued participation of UNDP in global research programmes, the development of performance indicators, and the major challenge of resource constraints in the successor programming arrangements. The framework aimed to provide linkages among the global, regional, and national contexts. He noted that the framework did not contain operational guidelines, which would be made available at the present session.

124. General support for the framework as providing an improved elaboration of UNDP global cooperation programmes was expressed. However, several speakers

emphasized the broad scope of the framework and what seemed to be overambitious goals. One delegation stated that the language used affected the credibility of the paper and suggested that the paper be resubmitted to a future session of the Executive Board. Many speakers commented that it was not clear whether UNDP had the capacity to carry out the activities described in the document. Priorities and areas of concentration must be more clearly defined. The financial aspects raised a number of questions, with some delegations wondering whether UNDP had the resources to carry out the described tasks. One speaker noted that UNDP would be obliged to pay for its commitments in inter-agency mechanisms, perhaps with very little money left for other programmes that were directly linked to the five priority areas.

125. Many speakers addressed the need for more effective performance indicators and benchmarks. One representative, in noting that bilateral donors were grappling with similar issues, invited UNDP to discuss work undertaken in that field with the development assistance branch of his Government. In the area of financial management, clarification on the UNDP role in relation to the Bretton Woods institutions was sought, as was assurance that linkages with those institutions were being strengthened. One speaker requested information on cooperation with the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC).

126. Several speakers stressed the importance of gender issues, and one asked for the inclusion of a programme to promote entrepreneurship among women. Attention to emerging global issues should also be included.

127. Support for particular activities contained in the framework was also expressed, including the promotion of global partnerships, the Sustainable Development Networking Programme and the UNDP/World Health Organization/World Bank Special Programme of Research and Training in Tropical Diseases. The involvement of non-governmental organizations in execution was noted favourably. One speaker drew attention to the upcoming finalization of the agreement to create an International Vaccine Institute, to be headquartered in Seoul, for which a signing ceremony would be held in New York on 28 October 1996.

128. The Director of the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases of the World Health Organization made a statement relating to the participation of UNDP in the Special Programme. He noted the key role played by UNDP in the establishment of the Special Programme as well as its guidance during recent managerial changes which had maximized efficiency and avoided inter-agency duplication. The co-sponsorship of UNDP was greatly valued and it was hoped that a strong commitment by UNDP to the Programme would continue.

129. The Assistant Administrator responded that the global cooperation framework was different from the regional or country frameworks as it represented policy and programme development from a headquarters-based level. He explained that UNDP was trying to develop methodologies, tools, programmes, and policies in its priority areas and to develop indicators to measure progress and performance. He stressed that it was important to understand changes in the global economy and to examine new information technologies and their effect on the way UNDP managed its services and assisted developing countries. While not a centre of excellence in main focus areas, UNDP was developing a more professional approach. He hoped that during the next three years UNDP could deliver on

issues where gaps had existed in the past. He stressed the need to develop indicators, particularly those specific to UNDP activities, and took note of the offer from the representative of the United Kingdom to look at the advanced work of the Overseas Development Administration in its development of indicators. He noted work in progress with UNICEF and the World Bank in developing indicators on poverty eradication. He also noted that UNDP had in-house capabilities, which meant that consultants did not always need to be hired. UNDP remained committed to its participation in global partnerships. With regard to financing, the framework anticipated additional partnerships, trust funds and cost-sharing as means to enlarge the scope of funding for its activities. He noted that UNDP was working with ACC to promote harmonized procedures for technical cooperation in the United Nations system. He agreed with the delegation that had raised the issue of support to the analytical efforts and institutions in the south. Discussions were under way with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development on developing a programme to examine global trade, which would be supported by the global programme. He noted that all strategies would include a clear component for capacity-building.

130. One delegation, supported by another, reiterated its preference that the document be reissued, in particular so that when it was read by a variety of audiences it would accurately reflect the contents and purposes of the global programme. That request did not reflect lack of support for the programme. The clarifications provided by the Assistant Administrator at the present session had been very useful and could be included in the revision.

131. Following discussion among several members of the Executive Board, the President announced that a revised version would be submitted at the first regular session 1997, taking into account all discussion at the present session. It was understood that that would not impede the carrying out of the activities contained in the document.

132. The Assistant Administrator assured the Executive Board that the comments would be incorporated in the revised global cooperation framework.

133. The Executive Board approved the following decision:

96/42. Global cooperation framework

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the global cooperation framework contained in document DP/GCF/GLO/1;

2. Requests the Administrator to submit to the Executive Board at its first regular session 1997 a revised text of the global cooperation framework, taking into account clarifications given and comments made, and without prejudice to the implementation of the global cooperation framework as presented and orally clarified at the current session to be approved, on a no-objection basis.

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VIII. UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN

134. The Associate Administrator introduced the report of the Administrator on the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) (DP/1996/33). The sound financial management of UNIFEM during the previous 18 months had led to the positive financial situation described in the report. The current resource situation in UNIFEM was primarily a result of the successes of the financial monitoring mechanisms put in place, combined with the Fund's proactive resource mobilization efforts. At the present time, there was confidence in re-establishing the operational reserve at the level of $3 million. The UNDP Bureau for Finance and Administration would review with UNIFEM the partial funding formula and report to the Executive Board in early 1997 with a proposal for the resumption of project approvals within such a modality.

135. The positive outcome of the comprehensive external evaluation of UNIFEM, carried out by the firm of Management Systems International, in response to Executive Board decision 95/10, was also recognized. The report on the evaluation was contained in document DP/1996/14. In UNDP, an in-house process for strengthening UNDP collaboration with UNIFEM in the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women had begun. The complementary roles of both organizations would be defined more clearly. The use of UNIFEM as an implementing agency in both agency and nationally executed programmes was also being promoted. The Associate Administrator proposed that UNIFEM be allowed to access support for policy and programme development under the new support-cost arrangements. UNDP was also taking steps towards having UNIFEM become an executing agency that would offer more effective mechanisms to leverage UNDP programme resources to benefit women.

136. The Executive Director of the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) noted that, by decision 95/10, UNOPS had been asked to be involved in contracting for the evaluation of UNIFEM. He provided details of the conditions considered by UNOPS in establishing the contract, in particular the need for objectivity, transparency, and the application of prevailing best business practices. The standardized procedures of UNOPS had been used, including market research, drawing up a short list, proposals, and evaluation by criteria known to all participants. Lengthy negotiations had ensued in order to ensure that the terms of reference endorsed by the Executive Board were understood and followed. During the process, there had been improvement and refinement of techniques and methodologies as well as a modification of the composition of the team and the additional participation of developing countries on the advisory panel. An academician well renowned in gender issues had assisted in the advisory panel. The scope of the evaluation had required that UNOPS pay close attention to the contract administration phase without interference in the substantive aspects or the confidentiality of the evaluation. The evaluation team's activities were monitored on a continuous basis to ensure that milestones and deadlines were met. As a result, unanticipated delays had been managed effectively without resort to crisis management and the process kept on target and within its budget.

137. Ms. Marina Fanning, of Management Systems International, presented an overview of the findings of the evaluation of UNIFEM.

138. A statement by the Director of UNIFEM was distributed.

139. Delegations commented on the report on the UNIFEM financial situation, the proposals made by the Associate Administrator and the evaluation report.

140. It was clear, many speakers noted, that UNIFEM had made a good recovery from its financial problems of the previous year and had restored the confidence of donors in its operation. Nevertheless, the Fund would still have to operate with limited resources and therefore focus its efforts. While some delegations expressed broad agreement with the recommendations contained in the evaluation report, many others stated that they could not yet endorse all of the recommendations. Support was expressed for the re-establishment of the operational reserve.

141. The document containing the executive summary of the evaluation report was too optimistic and did not contain enough critical analysis, according to many speakers. The main report, it was noted, did refer to several weaknesses and was more balanced. Many delegations expressed the view that it was too early to make far-reaching decisions on the operation of UNIFEM and further discussions were needed. While some supported the recommendation that UNIFEM become an executing agency of UNDP, several others had strong reservations. One speaker suggested that UNIFEM make a proposal to the Executive Board on how it planned to implement the evaluation findings.

142. Wide support was expressed for the institution of a management information system in UNIFEM, improved computer systems and work space, strengthened training programmes, and an increase in staff, including the freeing of restriction on hiring for eight previously established posts. Some speakers also agreed that UNIFEM should be paid by other United Nations organizations when it provided advice.

143. Several speakers expressed concern about any shifting away in programme focus from support to women in poorer countries. Some other delegations stressed the need for UNIFEM to work in all regions of the world, in particular in Eastern and Central Europe and in the Commonwealth of Independent States, where it did not yet operate.

144. One delegation expressed reservations about the earmarking of funds at the country level for follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women. The description of UNIFEM playing a catalytic role in the follow-up to the Conference needed to be documented more thoroughly. One delegation stated that UNIFEM should concentrate on the economic and political empowerment of women and the strengthening of women's networks at the national and local levels. While UNIFEM should not duplicate the work of the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) (which had not been mentioned in the evaluation report) or the International Training and Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), it should draw on their expertise. The Fund was also encouraged to cooperate more closely with UNDP with regard to gender-in-development issues. One delegation noted that it would contribute to the trust fund on violence against women that had been set up by UNIFEM.

145. The Director of UNIFEM responded to the questions and comments raised. The major challenge for UNIFEM was how to become a more strategic and accountable organization that emphasized the empowerment of women. UNIFEM must build on its strengths, as detailed in the evaluation report, in the post-Beijing era, albeit with limited resources. All programmes and projects would be examined for measurable results and in terms of priority issues and strategies. She explained that executing agency status for UNIFEM would greatly facilitate support for the organization and would not affect its programme focus and way of doing business. There was no intention to shift away from poorer countries. She noted that the work of UNIFEM was complementary to that of DAW and INSTRAW. UNIFEM worked with other parts of the system, including through its regional programme advisers, who worked with resident coordinators at the country level. Currently, the main weakness of UNIFEM was its overambitious programme design. She also noted that many pilot projects were not designed as such [illegible] that some income-generating projects were designed to deal with individual groups of women and not linked to larger issues. In addition, there had also not been enough effort to transmit lessons learned.

146. Ms. Fanning commented that UNIFEM must choose elements to improve its work. She noted that funds were being used appropriately, and materials and experiences were utilized at the local level. The weak point was that the organization tried to do too much with too little. Its human resource base was too small and staff were working at a disadvantage. There were often gaps in reporting and on logistical matters. UNIFEM needed to refocus and concentrate on a few important matters. Many regional programme advisers were effective because of their personal qualities. In response to a query, she explained that the suggested matrix structure for UNIFEM would allow staff to make day-to-day management decisions that would result in less burden on management.

147. The Associate Administrator emphasized the attention UNDP had paid to the issue of the UNIFEM financial situation as well as to enhancing its relationship with the Fund, including through both regular in-house and regional meetings. Several measures had been taken, including the earmarking in the global cooperation framework of 10 per cent of all programme funding for the empowerment of women, the training of country development officers, and the establishment of better links between UNIFEM regional programme officers and UNDP gender-in-development officers. If UNIFEM was to be more involved in giving policy advice, that support could be accessed under SPPD. With reference to comments regarding the possibility of UNIFEM becoming an executing agency, he noted that there was not likely to be a huge portfolio of execution owing to the trend in national execution. Psychologically, the status of UNIFEM as an executing agency would mean empowerment for that organization. Resident representatives could then be proactive in seeing how UNIFEM could be more involved in the execution and implementation of programmes.

148. The Executive Board approved the following decision:

96/43. United Nations Development Fund for Women

The Executive Board

1. Welcomes the report of the external evaluation of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (DP/1996/33), in accordance with Executive Board decision 96/32;

2. Takes note with appreciation of the initial actions being undertaken by the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the proposals on follow-up to the recommendations of the Fund's external evaluation, as reflected in the reaction of the Fund to the evaluation report given during the current session;

3. Requests the United Nations Development Fund for Women to elaborate a more detailed and comprehensive response to the evaluation of the Fund by the first regular session 1997;

Programme strategies

4. Decides that the United Nations Development Fund for Women should produce a concise strategy and supporting business plan that emphasizes its catalytic, mainstreaming and advocacy roles. This should also demonstrate the Fund's intention to work increasingly with strategic and capacity-building activities. The strategy and business plan should clearly identify the Fund's role in the United Nations system and how its work relates to the work of other United Nations bodies. The Fund should report orally on progress at the first regular session 1997 and present the strategy paper and business plan during the annual session 1997;

5. Also decides that, in accordance with the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women and with General Assembly resolution 50/120, the strategy should give due consideration to activities in the least developed countries and low-income countries, particularly in Africa;

6. Recommends that the United Nations Development Fund for Women continue to focus its programme and strengthen programme design and performance;

Management and administration

7. Encourages the United Nations Development Fund for Women to adjust, within the approved budget, its management, administration and personnel, bearing in mind the need to keep administrative costs at an appropriate level;

Coordination

8. Requests that the United Nations Development Fund for Women cooperate closely with the relevant United Nations organs and bodies, in particular the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat, in order to ensure that the Fund's advocacy activities form part of the system-wide efforts of the United Nations in the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, bearing in mind the need to avoid duplication and overlap;

Relationship with the United Nations Development Programme

9. Decides to consider at the first regular session 1997 the request of the Administrator that the United Nations Development Fund for Women may access funds from the support to policy and programme development facility, which will replace the TSS-1 facility in January 1997; and that arrangements be further explored regarding the possibility for the Fund to access United Nations Development Programme resources for purposes within the Fund's mandate and in accordance with United Nations Development Programme mandate and objectives, without jeopardizing the latter's own responsibility for the advancement of women;

Financial and reporting arrangements

10. Agrees to the re-establishment of the operational reserve at the initial level of $3 million and requests the United Nations Development Fund for Women to submit a detailed proposal for the methodology for calculating both the annual approval ceilings and the maintenance of the operational reserve level at the first regular session 1997 in preparation for the re-establishment of the partial funding system;

11. Invites the General Assembly to review the role of the Consultative Committee of the United Nations Development Fund for Women, bearing in mind the need for appropriate governance of the Fund;

12. Further invites the United Nations Development Fund for Women to continue its efforts to diversify its resource base by, inter alia, fund-raising from the private sector;

13. Decides that the United Nations Development Fund for Women shall resume biennial reporting on its work to the Executive Board, preferably at its annual session, except where separate reporting arrangements have been requested.

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149. After the adoption of the decision, one delegation, supported by three others, requested that UNIFEM report to the Executive Board at its first regular session 1997 on the role it could play in Eastern Europe, which would include the question of the need to extend its mandate. That delegation further requested that the information be included in the presentation of the strategy that would be prepared by UNIFEM for that session, in accordance with paragraph 4 of decision 96/43. The request was made in light of the comments on the Fund's mandate at previous sessions of the Executive Board and in agreement with the recommendations of the Consultative Committee for UNIFEM, which referred to the need to include in discussions on post-Beijing institutional arrangements and mandates the serious consideration of the role of UNIFEM in Eastern Europe. It was noted that the Fund, as part of the United Nations, should operate on the principle of universality.

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IX. UNFPA/UNDP: HARMONIZATION OF PRESENTATION OF BUDGETS AND ACCOUNTS

150. In presenting the oral progress report on the item on behalf of UNDP and UNFPA, the UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Finance and Administration introduced the various working papers of the joint UNDP/UNFPA/UNICEF Harmonization Working Group, which the Executive Board members had received. He commented briefly on the working papers relating to terminology, which covered agreed terms and related definitions, agreed expenditure categories that would be used for the preparation of the 1998-1999 budgets, the agreed common format for the resource plan and the agreed-upon budget table formats. The Assistant Administrator then informed the Board that the Joint Working Group was still addressing certain issues such as the treatment of other resources, the reimbursement of services provided to third parties, and post and staffing information to be included in the budget estimates. He concluded his progress report by stating that the exercise had taken into account the various comments on budget harmonization made by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the External Auditors, and also noted the extensive effort made by key staff of all three organizations to make the exercise a success.

151. Several delegations were pleased to see the positive progress to date of the exercise. In that context, one delegation requested that the current success be kept on track while another delegate looked forward to continued acceleration of the exercise. Delegations felt that the exercise was useful to the organizations and the Executive Board. Both the Assistant Administrator and the Director, Division for Finance, Personnel and Administration, UNFPA, were appreciative of the positive comments made.

152. One representative, supported by another, while requesting the definition of programme versus administrative costs, was concerned that the distribution between programme support costs and administrative costs might become blurred, and stressed that the organizations must be very careful not to shift administrative costs to programme support in an arbitrary manner. The Assistant Administrator stressed that the composition of programme support and administrative costs as applied were fully transparent. The Director, UNFPA, stated that the definitions were provided in the paper on terminology; the Executive Board might wish to pursue the matter with the organizations, if it had any reservations about the definitions that had been provided.

153. Some delegations stressed the need for the organizations to ensure that with the new presentation of the budget, that comparability with the previous budgets remained possible. Both the Assistant Administrator and the Director, UNFPA, assured the Board that comparability would be possible.

154. One delegation was appreciative in seeing that terminology had been rationalized and that all sources and uses of funds could be seen comparatively for all the organizations. The same delegation stressed that with the new format there would be trade-offs as the Executive Board moved to looking at budgets with a more strategic focus.

155. One delegation was keen to see in the budget presentation the costs of country offices and the related contributions made by host Governments towards such local office costs.

156. The Executive Board took note of the oral progress report on the harmonization of budgets and accounts.

X. UNDP/UNFPA: REPORT ON FIELD VISIT OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

157. The Permanent Representative of the Gambia, Team Coordinator of the field visit to Malawi and Mozambique in June 1996, introduced the mission report (DP/1996/CRP.14).

158. The representative of the Netherlands, the team's rapporteur, informed the Executive Board of the findings and recommendations contained in the report. A main finding had been the difficulty in bridging the gap between headquarters and the country offices, that is, between theory and practice. However, he noted that it would be premature to enter into a full discussion of that issue at the present time, given the internal processes under way within the organizations. The team also found that steps should be taken to provide greater information at the country level on the work of the Executive Board, programme focus could be enhanced, and the procedures for the operationalization of the successor programming arrangements should be simplified.

159. He highlighted several other aspects of the mission report, such as the fact that both countries were in transition, the positive role of UNDP in aid coordination, and the difficulty in showing concrete results. The threat of HIV/AIDS was particularly significant, especially in Malawi, where 30 per cent of the urban population was affected. In Mozambique, some 14 per cent were affected by HIV/AIDS, including returning refugees. UNFPA had a significant role in the two countries. It was noted that the team had witnessed the work of traditional birth attendants trained by UNFPA. The team wished to meet with representatives of the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa and UNFPA Africa Division to discuss further the various findings of the mission report.

160. Recommendations for future Executive Board field visits included the following: allow more time for reporting and analysis; minimize high-level protocol meetings; allow more Board members to participate if their interest was very high; and arrange shorter visits and possibly visit only one country.

161. The representative of Malawi expressed his country's appreciation for the work of the UNDP Resident Representative. He stated that his country had a new Government and was still in transition. The mission report highlighted the areas on which the Government continued to focus. He hoped the recommendations would be taken into account in order to enhance further the role of the Resident Representative in Malawi.

162. The representative of Mozambique expressed his Government's appreciation to the Executive Board for arranging the visit to his country. He cited the key factor of promoting people-centred development in Mozambique. Such missions were very important and increased monitoring was welcomed. The importance of

cooperation with UNDP, in particular the emphasis on capacity-building, transcended technical cooperation, as Mozambique was emerging from conflict and rebuilding its economic and social fabric. He anticipated that the relationship with UNDP and UNFPA would continue to be strengthened in his country at both the country and headquarters levels.

163. The Permanent Representative of Belize, one of the team members, stated that he was impressed by the development work in both countries. He noted concern about the need for sustainable energy sources in the two countries. The field visits were important as the reports provided UNDP and UNFPA with insights from delegations. He commented on a number of the recommendations, including the need to strengthen technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) at all levels, noting that the field visit itself was a form of TCDC. The visit had also shown that small investments were important, such as the provision of radios to enable people to learn about family planning. He asked that field visits be organized to non-recipient countries in order to enhance the image of the two organizations.

164. Delegations commented favourably on the mission report and cited the need for substantive discussion on the findings of the field visits, as well as the need to inform the Executive Board of follow-up on the recommendations at future sessions. Queries were raised about the comments made in the mission report on the relationship between headquarters and the country offices, the role of the Government in the development of the country strategy note in Malawi, and the measurement of programme success. Several speakers raised the issue of the effects of lack of resources on the programmes in the countries visited. One delegation requested further information on the provision of reproductive health services in Malawi.

165. One speaker requested that the next mission focus on the impact of UNDP and UNFPA programmes in the countries visited. That delegation also suggested that some historical background of the work of the organizations in those countries be included.

166. The Deputy Director of the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa expressed the appreciation of the Bureau for the mission report. She stated that the interventions were very useful and that the recommendations of the report would be studied and followed up on. Further meetings on the recommendations of the mission report would be arranged. The Executive Board's exposure to field work could only benefit and strengthen the capacity of the Bureau to support its country offices and the countries concerned. In addressing the findings of the report, she noted that the perceived gap between headquarters and country offices could be linked to the many requests to respond to headquarters initiatives. The priority of the Bureau, however, was to respond to requests and priorities of the country offices. Enhanced programme focus was promoted through new planning instruments such as the programme approach, and the introduction of the successor programming arrangements, for which there were training sessions and workshops. She was in agreement that Malawi and Mozambique were in a period of transition. She noted that in Malawi, UNDP had sought to emphasize government management through pilot initiatives, which were district- and village-oriented and supported through the decentralization of funding to the district level. She noted the comments expressing concern about

HIV/AIDS and stated that UNDP was trying to maximize its assistance in that area. She commented that General Assembly requirements were that the country strategy note be formulated by the Government with the assistance of the United Nations system. She would, in that regard, review the case of the Malawi country strategy note. In response to the comment that the country offices were unaware of the United Nations Special Initiative on Africa, she stated that more information had been sent to the country offices since June, when the field visit had taken place.

167. The Deputy to the Director of the UNFPA Africa Division stated his appreciation for the findings of the mission report. Members had come back with the recognition of the seriousness of population challenges faced in those countries as well as accomplishments to date. He noted that in the population field, the two countries visited had started at a lower point in terms of awareness and services than most other countries in the African context. The awareness created, although still short of desirable levels, was therefore an impressive achievement. He noted that UNFPA was in the process of developing a rationalization of the numbers and types of requests by headquarters to country offices in order to give the offices more time to work on programme implementation. He also recognized that the slowness of responses from headquarters to country office inquiries was a frequent problem and part of the solution could be in the rationalization of the financial system since most interchanges related to the clarification of financial programmes. With regard to increased monitoring, it was hoped that government implementing agencies would eventually be able to do a considerable amount of monitoring currently falling to UNFPA, thus leaving UNFPA to look to broader questions of effectiveness and efficiency of support to countries.

168. The representative of the Netherlands thanked both organizations for the preparation and organization of the field visit.

169. The Executive Board took note of the mission report on the field visit to Malawi and Mozambique (DP/1996/CRP.14).

UNFPA SEGMENT

170. Before moving to the consideration of the first UNFPA agenda item, the President invited the Executive Director to report on developments at the Fund since the annual meeting of the Executive Board. In her statement, the Executive Director outlined some of the recent initiatives taken by UNFPA in its continuing implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo, Egypt, in 1994. She touched on efforts being made to increase execution of UNFPA-supported projects by Governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and on the new country programme presentations that were being introduced at that session in response to recent decisions of the Board. She also reported on the work of the Task Force on Basic Social Services for All of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, of which she was the chair, as well as on the support of UNFPA for and participation in UNAIDS. She noted in that regard that UNFPA was the current chair of the Committee of Co-Sponsoring Organizations of UNAIDS.

171. The Executive Director briefly discussed the financial situation of UNFPA, reporting that it seemed likely that the Fund would not be able to duplicate the significant increase in income that had been experienced the previous year, immediately following the ICPD. It appeared as though the income in 1996 would be at about the same level as in 1995. That was a matter of concern given the great reproductive health needs of developing countries and the commitments that had been made by the world's Governments at the ICPD. She called upon all countries to look again at their funding levels to see if they could do more. She also reported that the Fund was trying to devise additional strategies for increasing resources.

172. Members of the Executive Board welcomed the Executive Director's comments and said that they appreciated the opportunity to have a dialogue with her. Most of the comments concerned the Fund's income situation, and many delegations called upon countries to live up to the commitments they had made at the Cairo conference. One delegation mentioned the concern felt in Latin America and the Caribbean that, given the Fund's new approach for resource allocation as contained in decision 96/15 and the level-income trend, that total UNFPA funding to the region could actually decrease. Several delegations asked for more specific information on the Fund's ideas for new funding strategies.

173. In her reply, the Executive Director said that possible funding initiatives included calling upon non-traditional donor countries; asking programme countries themselves to help in finding bilateral assistance in funding multi-bilateral activities; and, possibly, interesting the private sector in supporting UNFPA projects. She also reported that UNFPA had been having valuable discussions with the European Union, and she hoped to be able to announce areas of mutually agreed-upon cooperation in the near future. In response to concerns about different funding levels in the regions of the world, the Executive Director stated that it had never been the Fund's intention that one region would suffer even if more resources were being devoted to another region. That did, of course, depend on the Fund's ability to continue to register growth in its funding levels, which the results of the Cairo conference had seemed to promise. Beyond that, the Fund was trying to maintain an equitable distribution among countries within each of the groups established by decision 96/15. She also stated that the Fund would continue to work on refining the indicators used in implementing decision 96/15, realizing that the quality of the data used for certain indicators varied from country to country.

174. Following the Executive Director's statement and the ensuing discussion, the President introduced Ms. Ingar Brueggemann, the Secretary-General of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), the largest NGO in the world working in the field of reproductive health, specifically in the area of family planning. Ms. Brueggemann discussed the recent memorandum of understanding that had been signed between UNFPA and IPPF in July 1996, telling the Executive Board that it would increase the scope for cooperative implementation and evaluation of reproductive health activities between the two organizations. She also discussed the more general question of expanding cooperation between United Nations agencies and NGOs, as called for by, inter alia, the ICPD Programme of Action. She elaborated on how the different strengths of NGOs and intergovernmental organizations could complement each other if they worked in

partnership to bring about their mutual aim - the improvement of the quality of life of the people of the world.

175. Several delegations took the opportunity to welcome the statement by Ms. Brueggemann and the recently signed memorandum of understanding between UNFPA and IPPF. Some delegations reported that their Governments made contributions to both organizations and stated that increased cooperation between the two could only lead to greater effectiveness on the part of both. In discussing the general question of the increased use of NGOs for execution of UNFPA-supported activities, several delegations pointed out that it implied improved mechanisms for selecting appropriate NGOs with which to work and for ensuring their accountability. The Executive Director agreed that such was the case and informed the Executive Board that the Fund was working on improving its capacity in these areas.

XI. FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

176. In her statement to the Executive Board on UNFPA financial operations in 1995, the Director of the Division for Finance, Personnel and Administration (DFPA) highlighted some of the significant developments that had been presented in the Annual Financial Review (document DP/FPA/1996/22). The Fund's regular resource income had increased almost 18 per cent from 1994 to 1995, reaching $312.6 million in the latter year. There had also been a significant increase in the amount of multi-bilateral assistance income.

177. The increase in income in 1995 continued the favourable trend reported for the year 1994 when regular resources rose 21 per cent compared to the previous year, 1993. The Director stressed, however, as had the Executive Director, that it did not appear that there would be similar increases in 1996, saying that UNFPA could readily utilize additional funds The capacity for additional resource utilization was illustrated by the fact that in 1995 the Fund had been able to increase its total programme expenditures at the same time that it had reduced unspent resources from previous years. Programme expenditures in 1995 had increased by 65.3 per cent over that in 1993 while year-end unspent resources had declined in both quantitative and percentage terms, from $47.2 million, or 21.5 per cent of UNFPA regular resources, in 1993 to $23.7 million, or 7.6 per cent, in 1995. She outlined the amounts of project expenditures that had been executed by various modalities, including Governments, UNFPA, other United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The Director was able to report that the percentage of total expenditures devoted to administrative and programme support services (APSS) had declined from 22.2 per cent in 1993 to 16.1 per cent in 1995. Measured against income, the percentage had declined from 20.5 per cent to 16.1 per cent.

178. The Director noted that the improvement in programme delivery and the reduction in unused resources at year-end over the last few years had been made possible because of such measures as further decentralization in decision-making at headquarters and in the field; simplification and streamlining of programming procedures; diversification of project modalities, with gradually increasing

government execution; speeding up of financial reporting; and increased training of staff.

179. The Director underlined the fact that while programme expenditure had increased so had oversight of UNFPA activities. Audit coverage had greatly increased over the last few years, with the assistance of a UNFPA audit section in the UNDP Division for Audit and Management Review and the UNDP regional service centres established in Kuala Lumpur and Harare. In addition to the standard audit exercises at headquarters, more than 50 country offices were audited in 1995, compared to only 5 in 1993.

180. In their comments on the Annual Financial Review, several delegations noted that they found the report to be clear, easy-to-read, comprehensive and succinct, and they thanked the secretariat for preparing such a useful document. Several delegations also noted that the Review indicated that the financial situation of the Fund was basically healthy, although they regretted that 1996 would not show the same increase in income that had been registered in 1995. A number of delegations pointed out that it was the trend over a number of years that was important, and in that regard the financial situation of UNFPA was favourable. Other delegations commented that the trend was both a recognition of the high quality of work being done by UNFPA and an indication of the seriousness with which countries had taken the commitments they had made at the ICPD in Cairo in 1994.

181. A question was raised about the decline in the last few years of the number of donor countries to the Fund. Several delegations noted with appreciation that there had been an increasing amount of resources devoted to Africa, and they looked upon that as being a positive development in line with Executive Board decisions. One delegation referred to the importance of South-South cooperation. Several delegations expressed their satisfaction that the increase in the APSS budget had been much lower than the overall increase in expenditures. Delegations also commented favourably on the declining trend in carry-overs from one year to the next. They urged the Fund to continue to keep a close eye on that since there should be neither overexpenditure nor too much underexpenditure.

182. One delegation questioned whether the continuing provision of 20 per cent of income as an operational reserve was necessary. One delegation was pleased to see that the amount of unpaid pledges was greatly reduced. Another delegation commented favourably about the increase in audit activity. Several delegations expressed concern about the fact that the percentage of projects executed by Governments had declined in the last year while those of UNFPA-executed projects had gone up. That was a source of concern since one of the Fund's priorities should be to increase national capacity for project execution while UNFPA was meant to be a funding and not an executing agency. Also, in that connection, delegations mentioned that they were pleased that there had been increasing use of NGOs to execute projects (up by 16 per cent from 1994 to 1995) but the overall percentage of such projects was still moderate and needed to be increased. Another question was raised as to why UNFPA spent a large percentage of resources on the procurement of contraceptive supplies. Additional information was also requested about trust funds, asking from which countries they were being provided and for what purpose.

183. In replying to some of the questions raised by delegations, the Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) noted that the forecasts for income in 1996 were based on conservative and prudent forecasts, which had always been the Fund's practice. He reminded the delegates that the 20 per cent operational reserve had been mandated by the Executive Board, most recently in 1994. He felt that the requirement was still reasonable and responded to the Fund's needs. In response to the query of one delegation about the slow beginning of the fifth UNFPA country programme in Indonesia, which started in 1995, he explained that the realignment of the new country programme with the ICPD goals had unfortunately caused a slower-than-expected rate of implementation in 1995.

184. The Director for Finance, Personnel and Administration responded to the several queries that had been raised about national execution of projects. She agreed with the Board that it was a very important matter and one that UNFPA was in the process of reviewing with a view to strengthening the Fund's performance in that area. Increasing national execution of projects required increasing the ability of Governments and NGOs to monitor and audit projects in order to ensure their accountability for the funds under their custody. She informed the Executive Board that the Executive Director had recently instructed the UNFPA staff to avoid substituting UNFPA execution for government execution and to ensure that conditions were created that would allow Governments to assume greater execution responsibility. In that connection, the Executive Director had stressed the following general principles: that UNFPA in the first instance must continue to promote national execution of UNFPA-supported projects; whenever national capacity did not yet exist or where such capacity was limited, UNFPA should consider designating other partners in the United Nations system or international NGOs as executing agencies, with the understanding that national capacity-building should be their primary task.

185. With respect to the issue of UNFPA procurement, the Director explained that UNFPA had a comparative advantage for the procurement of contraceptives and related supplies. Thus, part of the reason for the increase in money spent on UNFPA-executed projects was the large number of requests the Fund was receiving from Governments for assistance in procuring contraceptives. That service was also one way of helping Governments to carry out their own population and reproductive health projects. She indicated that such type of procurement was certainly in line with the concept of lead agency as defined by the Inter-Agency Procurement Working Group (IAPWG), in which UNFPA was an active participant. As such, UNFPA represented a major share of contraceptive procurement, had the necessary technical competence and was committed to coordinated procurement.

186. The Director agreed with delegations that the Fund needed to work to increase the number of donor countries. She indicated that because of lack of time she would follow up with delegations individually on some of the other questions that had been raised, i.e., with respect to trust funds and NGOs. The Director thanked the delegates for their encouraging remarks and assured them that UNFPA management would be guided by their many constructive observations.

187. The Executive Board took note of the Annual Financial Review, 1995, as contained in document DP/FPA/1996/22.

XII. UNFPA: COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS

188. Before introducing the new country programmes that the Fund was bringing to the Executive Board for its guidance and approval, the Deputy Executive Director (Programme) made a brief statement concerning the new presentation of country programme documents prepared for the Board. She noted that the new presentation was in response to three Board decisions: 96/13, calling on the Fund to re-think its country programme presentations; 95/15, on UNFPA programme priorities in light of ICPD; and 96/15 on the new approach for resource allocations. The new programme presentations were shorter - by about 40 per cent - than in the past, and, it was hoped, focused more on matters of concern to the Board, including lessons learned, comparative advantage, strategy, implementation plan, and expected results. The Deputy Executive Director said that she realized that improving the documents was an ongoing process, and one in which the Fund very much welcomed the comments and guidance of the Board.

189. Many of the delegations expressed support for the new presentations, saying that they found them to be much clearer and easier to read than in the past and felt that they went some ways towards reaching the goals of being more analytical and focusing on such matters as lessons learned and their application and on the comparative advantage of UNFPA *vis-à-vis* other donors. Many delegations emphasized that they wanted the Fund to continue in that direction, especially in the areas of lessons learned and on the modalities for implementing UNFPA programmes. The Deputy Executive Director concurred that those were areas that needed work.

190. Among the comments of various delegations, there were suggestions that, in spite of the improvements, the documents still needed to be more analytical and to concentrate even more on the focus and strategy of the proposed programmes. Delegations felt that UNFPA needed to identify its strategic niche and to demonstrate how it was arrived at and how it would be fulfilled. Several delegations commented that there needed to be clearer "outputs" that were expected from the programmes in order to have benchmarks for evaluating the success of the programme on its completion. Several delegations stated that the means of implementation should be made more explicit, especially in relation to such matters as national execution, national capacity-building and absorptive capacity.

191. One delegation requested that there be a clearer linkage to national development plans and that the main methods of contraception in use in a country be spelled out. Another delegation welcomed the shorter papers but stated that it might also be advisable to have one-line descriptions that would summarize the main points of the programme very succinctly. The same delegation recommended that the indicators relating to ICPD goals should be put ahead of the usual demographic facts since they were more relevant to the actual programme being proposed. One delegation, speaking for another as well, stated that it hoped that the programme review and strategy development process, which was the key to the programming process, would not become "routinized" and that it should focus on the individual needs of each country. Those delegations also proposed that the papers contain a logical-framework annex that would have a clear purpose statement, outputs and indicators of achievement.

192. In their replies, both the Executive Director and Deputy Executive Director welcomed the positive comments and said that they would take to heart the many constructive suggestions that had been made. In discussing the need for programme indicators or outputs, they pointed out to the Board just how difficult they were to identify and measure. UNFPA was in all cases contributing to a national programme, which necessarily included many inputs from a number of sources, all of which were designed to bring about positive social changes. In such a context, it was sometimes hard to measure what role UNFPA played and what the specific results of its efforts were. In that case, "process indicators", which showed such things as number of staff trained or health facilities equipped, were not enough. What was needed was an indication of what the collective programme had done to improve the lives of people. That was extremely difficult, but the administration recognized the need to continue working to develop appropriate indicators in order to be able to show, and not just to the Executive Board, that UNFPA efforts were making a difference.

193. The Deputy Executive Director also informed the Board that there were several country programmes that the Fund would like to extend through the end of 1997, with no additional funding required. Because of the large number of country programmes expiring in 1996, a great strain was being put on the Fund's programming process. Therefore, those programmes that still had sufficient funds available to carry out activities through 1997 would be extended by an extra year in order that the new programmes could be given the full consideration they merited. These programmes were: Botswana, Colombia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Gabon, Jordan, Lesotho, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Sao Tome and Principe, Swaziland and Thailand and the pre-programme activities in South Africa.

A. Latin America and the Caribbean

194. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) presented the proposed country programmes for Latin America and the Caribbean. A number of delegations made comments of general support for the proposed programmes in that region, as well as elsewhere. Commenting on programmes in the Latin American and Caribbean region, delegations reiterated their concerns that the region not suffer as a result of the new approach for resource allocations. In this regard, the Permanent Representative of Panama intervened to say that while his country was very grateful for the UNFPA support that it had received and was receiving, there was great concern in his country about the classification of Panama as a group "C" country under the new approach. There was a fear that, in fact, resources for Panama would be cut and the gains that the country had made would be lost. The matter was taken seriously enough in his country that the Social Cabinet on 23 July 1996 had approved a resolution expressing its concern. He pointed out the large number of problems still being faced in Panama, including the large percentage of the population living below the poverty line and, especially, the great needs of the indigenous population, whose maternal mortality, infant mortality, female illiteracy and school drop-out rates were especially high. His country appreciated the responsiveness of the Fund in addressing the question.

195. In her reply, the Deputy Executive Director stated that it was understandable that there were concerns about the new approach for resource allocation, but she assured the Board that every effort would be made to ensure that gains already made would not be jeopardized. In any case, she reported that the system was only now beginning to be applied for new programmes that started in 1997. Commitments already made were being honoured, and the only possible constraint on new allocations was if the Fund's income actually declined, which she hoped would not be the case. The new approach was being implemented in a phased and flexible manner. As always, UNFPA assistance would be focused on the most disadvantaged groups.

196. In speaking of the Latin American region as a whole, several delegations mentioned the importance that information, education and communication (IEC), especially family life education, played in the region. They also brought up the important need for increased advocacy efforts to help bring about a climate of opinion favourable to implementing the ICPD Programme of Action. The Deputy Executive Director concurred with these views.

Assistance to the Government of Honduras (DP/FPA/CP/154)

197. The important role of advocacy was referred to by the Deputy Executive Director when she introduced the proposed new country programme for Honduras. A major part of the proposed programme involved working with the Government and civil society to consolidate a national consensus on population and reproductive health issues, especially in regard to gender equity and the rights of women. Another area in which the Fund would help the Government would be in improving reproductive health services; the Fund would concentrate its efforts in three areas of the country. UNFPA would also help to build up a critical mass of trained personnel so that population factors would be taken into consideration in all relevant government departments. The Fund would also support enhancing technical capacity for carrying out decentralized programming activities.

198. Several delegations spoke in favour of the proposed programme. One delegation pointed out that the provision of condoms was important in the Honduran context, both as contraceptive and HIV/AIDS prevention measures, but this had not been dealt with in document DP/FPA/CP/154. The same delegation also questioned why the important assistance being received from the European Union had not been mentioned. Another delegation pointed out that the document had said that UNFPA was the only donor supporting "comprehensive reproductive health" programmes, but, in fact, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was also doing so. The same delegation pointed out the large discrepancies that existed in the provision of reproductive health services between urban and rural areas and questioned why two of the three areas for UNFPA support were in the two largest urban areas.

199. In her replies, the Deputy Executive Director was joined by the UNFPA Representative for Honduras, who had given an informal briefing on the proposed programme to the Executive Board the previous day. She informed the Board that condoms in Honduras were being provided by the programme of assistance of USAID, and, therefore, for the time being, that was not part of the UNFPA programme. The roles that the European Union and USAID were playing in Honduras were important, and UNFPA worked in close cooperation with them. As regards the

geographical focus of the proposed programme, the Representative pointed out that, first of all, it was the Government of Honduras that chose the proposed areas for UNFPA assistance. Beyond that, however, she could assure the Board that the Fund would be working in areas of great need - in marginal areas of Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula, where there was very limited availability of reproductive health services. UNFPA support would focus on improving the availability and accessibility of such services, including taking into account the needs of adolescents and of women working in assembly factories.

200. The Executive Board approved the proposed country programme for Honduras as presented in document DP/FPA/CP/154 in the amount of $8.2 million over the four-year period 1996-1999.

Request for extension of, and additional resources for, the country programme for Bolivia (DP/FPA/1996/25)

201. In introducing the proposed extension for the Bolivia country programme, the Deputy Executive Director said that the proposed extension would allow for the harmonization of programme cycles and would also allow the Fund to prepare a new country programme that would take into account the Government's recently adopted decentralization strategy and the ongoing efforts to implement the "Plan Vida", whose chief aim was to reduce maternal mortality.

202. One delegation, speaking in favour of the proposed extension, said that Bolivia was one country in which very fruitful collaboration took place between USAID and UNFPA, both agencies having similar approaches. In speaking of plans for decentralization, that delegation was concerned about the ability of localities and municipalities to carry out the functions being given to them. It also felt that sustainability was an important question in Bolivia and encouraged UNFPA to assist in that regard, particularly in clarifying the role that the private sector could play. The delegation also encouraged UNFPA to concentrate on underserved areas, targeting those most in need. Another delegation inquired whether the Fund was collaborating with the new government agency devoted to women's issues.

203. In replying to the questions from delegations, the Deputy Executive Director thanked the delegations for their support and said that all of the issues raised were also concerns of UNFPA. However, delegations should be aware that what was being proposed was a one-year extension of the ongoing country programme, and many of the concerns, such as those dealing with decentralization, would be dealt with more completely in the new programme to be presented to the Executive Board in 1997. She informed delegations that UNFPA had indeed started an effective collaboration with the Sub-Secretariat on Gender Issues.

204. The Executive Board approved the extension of the country programme for Bolivia for the year 1997 for an additional amount of $1.9 million as presented in document DP/FPA/1996/25. The delegation of Bolivia expressed appreciation to the Board for the extension of the programme and was pleased to note that the programme cycles of UNFPA, UNDP and UNICEF would be coordinated in the future.

Request for extension of, and additional resources for, the country programme for Cuba (DP/FPA/1996/23)

205. The Deputy Executive Director reported that in the case of Cuba the proposed programme extension would mostly serve to expand the availability of contraceptives, which was a major preoccupation given the country's economic difficulties. Cuba had made great strides in improving the health, including the reproductive health, of its inhabitants, but this was being compromised by current difficult circumstances as shown, for example, by the rise in the number of abortions.

206. Several delegations supported the proposed extension of, and additional resources for, the UNFPA country programme in Cuba, noting the country's economic situation. The completion of the oral contraceptives factory, which was being partially funded by UNFPA, would go a long way towards giving the country an assured supply of contraceptives. In this regard, it was also pointed out that the availability of condoms was an important issue in Cuba, both as a contraceptive measure and to help in the prevention of HIV/AIDS. One delegation questioned why the Board was only now being asked to approve the programme extension, which was for the year 1996. The Deputy Executive Director apologized for the delay, saying that the proposed extension had had to be postponed for technical reasons.

207. The Executive Board approved the extension of the country programme for Cuba, with an additional funding authority of $2.9 million, to the end of 1996, as presented in document DP/FPA/1996/23. The delegation of Cuba expressed its appreciation for the continuing support from UNFPA.

B. Africa

Assistance to the Government of Zimbabwe (DP/FPA/CP/160)

208. In her introduction to the proposed programme for Zimbabwe, the Director of the Africa Division informed delegations that under the new approach for resource allocation, Zimbabwe would be classified as a "B" country. The priorities for the UNFPA programme in the country would be to help reduce the rate of maternal mortality and to improve the status of women. There were also important programme components designed to address the reproductive health needs of adolescents and for IEC campaigns with young people as the target audience. HIV/AIDS was a serious problem in Zimbabwe, and UNFPA would collaborate with UNAIDS in seeking to control its spread, chiefly through advocacy activities.

209. One delegation mentioned that in the case of Zimbabwe, as with all UNFPA programmes, it was necessary to focus on certain priority areas, rather than trying to do a little of everything. Delegations noted that that was particularly true in Zimbabwe where there were a number of outside donors and one of the key issues was to ensure the effective coordination of their support. It was pointed out that in document DP/FPA/CP/160 mention had been made of a lack of ministerial support for prior activities in the area of maternal and child health. The delegation wanted to know what the Government's present level of commitment for these activities was. Delegations noted that HIV/AIDS was a

very serious issue in Zimbabwe, and the Fund, therefore, should collaborate closely with UNAIDS. In this regard, one delegation questioned why the impact of AIDS had not been reflected in national demographic studies.

210. In her reply, the Director of the Africa Division said that effective collaboration among donor agencies in Zimbabwe was a priority and one that UNFPA was pursuing. She reported that previous bureaucratic impediments to the implementation of the maternal and child health programme had been overcome and that UNFPA realized that the programme could only succeed if there was a sense of national ownership. In that regard, the UNFPA programme aimed to build on the strengths of both the Government and civil society in increasing national capacity for programme execution. As far as the need to incorporate the effects of HIV/AIDS into national planning, that was beginning to happen and was an area in which UNFPA was providing assistance.

211. The Executive Board approved the proposed country programme for Zimbabwe as presented in document DP/FPA/CP/160 in the amount of $8.9 million over the four-year period 1996-1999. The delegation of Zimbabwe thanked the Fund for its support, although it was somewhat concerned that under the new approach for resource allocation the country had changed from being a priority country to being classified as a "B" country. The delegation hoped that would not adversely affect the level of funding in the future.

Request for additional resources for the Ethiopia country programme (DP/FPA/1996/26)

212. The Director of the Africa Division reported that there had been an extraordinary change vis-à-vis attitudes concerning family planning in Ethiopia in the last few years. This had led to a much greater than expected need for contraceptives, and the Fund was proposing to spend an additional $10.3 million to the end of the programme cycle in 1997 in order to help provide for these contraceptive needs as well as to expand access to, and the quality of, reproductive health services. The Fund also proposed to redistribute funds within the different areas of the programme to take account of changed circumstances. The UNFPA programme would also be adjusted to reflect the Government's process of regionalization, and greater IEC efforts would be directed to the needs of rural populations.

213. One delegation mentioned that the Fund's support for advocacy activities in Ethiopia, where it had clearly made a difference in changing national attitudes, was a very desirable part of the programme, as it was in other African countries. Another delegation stated that UNFPA was a very valuable development partner in Ethiopia and welcomed greater collaborative efforts with the local office of USAID, which might be able to help the Fund in meeting the country's rapidly expanding need for contraceptives. That delegation also noted that the National Office of Population had been moved out of the Prime Minister's office and wondered whether that affected its visibility. Another delegation stated that it felt that the programme should put more emphasis on improving the status of women. The Director of the Africa Division said that was an increasing priority of UNFPA activities.

214. The Executive Board approved the additional resources for the country programme for Ethiopia in the amount of $10.3 million as presented in document DP/FPA/1996/26. The Head of the National Office of Population expressed the gratitude of his country for the support received from UNFPA and stated that Ethiopia was committed to reaching the goals of the National Population Policy. In that regard, he was happy to report that his own agency was gaining increasing support for its activities.

Request for extension of, and additional resources for, the Madagascar country programme (DP/FPA/1996/24)

215. The Director of the Africa Division reported that population activities in Madagascar had seen an extraordinary development in recent years because of increasing government commitment and the success of IEC efforts. The programme could therefore effectively utilize greater resources, especially in aiding efforts to reduce maternal mortality. The requested additional resources would also be utilized for increasing IEC activities, especially in rural areas and those designed for young people, and, in collaboration with other donors, for carrying out a demographic and health survey.

216. One delegation noted that because of its age structure Madagascar had a very large sexually active population and warranted the additional support that UNFPA was proposing. The same delegation also welcomed the fact that UNFPA was concentrating its activities in certain provinces of the country, in cooperation with other donors working elsewhere. IEC activities were very important in the context of Madagascar. For example, HIV/AIDS was not yet a very serious problem in the country, but this could easily change and IEC efforts would be crucial to containing it.

217. The Executive Board approved the extension of the country programme for Madagascar through the year 1998 with an additional amount of $3.9 million as presented in document DP/FPA/1996/24. The Permanent Representative of Madagascar thanked the Fund for its continuing support.

C. Arab States and Europe

Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (DP/FPA/CP/157)

218. In her introduction to the proposed Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People, the Director of the Division for Arab States and Europe said that this first UNFPA programme would focus on two major concerns: the lack of reliable demographic data and the limited access that women had to quality reproductive health services. To assist in those areas, UNFPA would provide support for the first census in 30 years and would help to strengthen reproductive health services in primary health care centres, in collaboration with other donors. The Fund would also cooperate with the Palestinian Authority in carrying out advocacy activities addressing gender concerns.

219. Several delegations expressed support for the first UNFPA Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People. The Counsellor of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations thanked the Fund for the first

Programme of Assistance. It would help the Palestinian people realize their goals in terms of population and in improving conditions of reproductive health. In particular, the assistance being proposed for carrying out the much-needed census would be of great value. He also thanked the Deputy Executive Director for amending the title and text of the proposed programme to make clear that it was being proposed for "The Palestinian people" and requested that such wording be reflected throughout the document.

220. The Executive Board approved the proposed programme of assistance for the Palestinian People as presented in document DP/FPA/CP/157 in the amount of $7.2 million over the four-year period 1996-1999.

Assistance to the Government of Tunisia (DP/FPA/CP/156)

221. In presenting the proposed programme for Tunisia, the Director for Arab States and Europe stressed that the country had made much progress in terms of reaching the ICPD goals, but that there remained significant disparities within and between various regions of the country. Therefore, UNFPA would focus its assistance on underserved and rural areas where reproductive health indicators were below national averages. Also, in the past, much of the programme had been specifically addressed to the needs of women, and there was a need to address the concerns of other groups as well, such as adolescents and men. She also mentioned that Tunisia was playing an increasing role in terms of South-South cooperation in the areas of population and reproductive health, and that was to be encouraged.

222. Several delegations spoke in favour of the proposed country programme for Tunisia. The Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of Tunisia endorsed the proposed programme and thanked the Fund for the fruitful collaboration that had existed between Tunisia and UNFPA.

223. The Executive Board approved the proposed country programme for Tunisia as presented in document DP/FPA/CP/156 in the amount of $7 million over the five-year period 1997-2001.

D. Asia and the Pacific

Assistance to the Government of Cambodia (DP/FPA/CP/159)

224. The Director of the Division for Asia and the Pacific expressed his appreciation for the several delegations that had participated in the previous day's informal briefing on the proposed country programme for Cambodia. The briefing had been made by the UNFPA Representative for Cambodia, who was present at the Executive Board. In introducing the programme, the Director of the Division for Asia and the Pacific pointed out that Cambodia was an "A" country with very great needs in terms of reproductive health and population. The proposed programme would help in addressing those needs by focusing on national capacity-building, which was the priority area for all development assistance in Cambodia.

225. One delegation raised the question as to whether or not the reference to weak government commitment mentioned in document DP/FPA/CP/159 did not conflict with the programme's strategy of working with the Government in undertaking the programme's activities. The UNFPA Representative for Cambodia replied that there was commitment but that Cambodia had the unusual situation of having two co-equal prime ministers, sometimes leading to a lack of clarity about government priorities. The line ministries were committed to carrying out the programme, and he was confident that UNFPA could work effectively with them. The Fund was also organizing a population forum where population and reproductive health issues could be discussed at the highest level, and that should help strengthen political support behind them.

226. The Executive Board approved the proposed country programme for Cambodia as presented in document DP/FPA/CP/159 in the amount of $16 million over the four-year period 1997-2000.

Assistance to the Government of Sri Lanka (DP/FPA/CP/155)

227. Sri Lanka had, according to the Director of the Asia and Pacific Division, reached all of the ICPD-related goals established in the new approach for allocation of resources, and therefore was classified as a "C" country. These national averages, however, included certain parts of the population and regions of the country where the indicators were much less favourable; the proposed programme would concentrate on these, including the problems of adolescents and of women in underserved areas. It was very important in a country like Sri Lanka not to jeopardize the gains that had already been made.

228. One delegation wondered whether the UNFPA programme would be able to support the populations in the areas affected by the conflict in the north and east of the country. The Director of the Asia and Pacific Division replied that UNFPA support would be concentrated not only at the central level but would also include underserved areas and groups, many of which were in the conflict areas, as well as vulnerable groups, such as displaced populations. UNFPA had been providing assistance in conflict areas cleared by the Government and would provide emergency assistance in reproductive health in conflict areas.

229. The Executive Board approved the proposed country programme for Sri Lanka as presented in document DP/FPA/CP/155 in the amount of $7.6 million over the four-year period 1997-2000. The delegation of Sri Lanka expressed its appreciation for the assistance being provided in the country programme. He also stated that his Government was very proud that the country had met so many of the ICPD goals but wished to reiterate that it still required assistance in improving the reproductive health of the Sri Lankan people.

Assistance to the Government of Viet Nam (DP/FPA/CP/158)

230. The Director of the Asia and Pacific Division explained that Viet Nam had been classified as a category "B" country under the new approach for resource allocation. Even though it had a low per capita income, it had made great strides in improving its reproductive health indicators. UNFPA's proposed programme would focus on assisting reproductive health services in six provinces, five of which were ones in which the Fund had worked in the previous

country programme. The aim was to coordinate international assistance to ensure complementarity of the programmes of different donors. UNFPA would also support some activities at the central level aimed at further integrating reproductive health into the national primary health care system.

231. One delegation commented favourably on the fact that the programme in Viet Nam seemed to be very focused in what it was trying to achieve. This same delegation did question how the programme proposed to work more closely with NGOs when experience had shown that NGOs were quite weak in Viet Nam. The delegation pointed out that the mix of contraceptive methods in use in Viet Nam seemed to rely heavily on the intra-uterine device (IUD) and to leave the responsibility for family planning to women. Were efforts being made to change that?

232. In his reply, the Director of the Division for Asia and the Pacific stated that UNFPA's policy had always been to support a "cafeteria approach" for the supply of contraceptives, leaving it to the individual or couple to decide which was the most appropriate. UNFPA was aware, however, of the unusually high usage of intra-uterine devices (IUDs) in Viet Nam, and the Fund had sponsored studies to analyse the reasons for that, looking at questions of user preference and service provider attitudes, in order to address the issues. With reference to the role of NGOs in Viet Nam, the Director explained that the Fund had been collaborating closely with grass-roots organizations in Viet Nam and was exploring new ways of increasing support to NGOs in several countries of the region, including Viet Nam.

233. The Executive Board approved the proposed country programme for Viet Nam as presented in document DP/FPA/CP/158 in the amount of $24 million over the four-year period 1997-2000. The delegation of Viet Nam expressed its appreciation for the support that was being extended by the Fund.

XIII. INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION IN HEALTH POLICY AND PROGRAMMING

234. In her oral report to the Executive Board on inter-agency coordination in health policy, the Executive Director reminded members that at the second regular session 1996, the Board had asked her to report back on efforts that were being made to strengthen cooperation further in that area, in particular with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). She was pleased to report that collaboration at the operational level was very effective, and she cited several examples. However, it had become apparent that in order to strengthen coordination at the policy and strategy level the Executive Board should pursue membership in the Joint Committee on Health Policy (JCHP), which currently consisted of representatives of the Executive Boards of WHO and UNICEF. At its special session in May 1996, the JCHP had taken up many important topics, several of them, in such areas as maternal health and mortality, adolescent health, reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS, being of direct relevance to the mandate of UNFPA. At the annual session of the Executive Board of UNICEF, the discussions had clearly indicated the valuable role that the JCHP played in helping that body develop policy and strategy. She felt that membership could be equally valuable for the Executive

Board of UNDP/UNFPA, and she asked members of the Board to consider that possibility.

235. Delegations welcomed the Executive Director's recommendation that the UNFPA Executive Board become a member of the JCHP, saying that they favoured all efforts to increase and improve coordination and cooperation between different parts of the United Nations system. Several delegations mentioned that when the issue had first been discussed at the second regular session 1996, they had been somewhat sceptical about the value of such membership. Since then, however, the positive reaction of the UNICEF Executive Board *vis-à-vis* the work of the JCHP, as mentioned in the Executive Director's statement, had convinced them that the body had a valuable role to play and that, therefore, it was worthwhile for the UNFPA Executive Board to be a member. That was especially true since it had become apparent that the JCHP considered many issues relating to reproductive health, in which case it was important not only that the voice of UNFPA be heard but that the JCHP help the Fund in developing its own policies and strategies. Some delegations still had concerns about the value of the role played by the JCHP and about the imbalance in participation at its meetings; they also wondered whether it was not a more reactive than pro-active body. However, on the whole, they felt that participation of UNFPA in its deliberations would be beneficial. A question was raised as to who actually participated in the deliberations of the JCHP: although it was the Executive Boards themselves that were the official members, most of the participants, in fact, appeared to be health experts from the secretariats or outside bodies.

236. The Executive Director clarified the question of participation in the JCHP by informing delegations that the main role of the Committee was to serve as a technical advisory body and, therefore, although members of the Executive Boards did take part in deliberations, most of the representatives of the Boards were experts from different health specialties. A question arose as to how the Executive Board should proceed in pursuing membership in the JCHP. Since the Board itself would be joining the JCHP, the consensus was that the question of membership should be pursued through the Presidency of the Board. The President then asked the delegation of Canada to coordinate drafting a decision to that effect.

237. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

96/38. Coordination in health policy and programming

The Executive Board

1. *Welcomes* the oral report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund on coordination in health policy and programming;

2. *Reaffirms* the need for close collaboration at all levels among the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Population Fund in the area of health policy and programming, including reproductive health, and invites the UNICEF-WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy to ensure that the United Nations Population Fund can participate in the meetings of the Joint Committee on Health Policy;

3. *Requests* the President of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund, with the assistance of the secretariat of the United Nations Population Fund, to ascertain the views of the Executive Boards of the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund on possible membership of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund in the Joint Committee on Health Policy;

4. *Requests* the President of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund to take appropriate action to enable the United Nations Population Fund secretariat to participate as an observer in the Joint Committee on Health Policy in January 1997;

5. *Also requests* the Executive Director to report to the Executive Board at its second regular session 1997 on the observations made in the Joint Committee on Health Policy and to make further recommendations as appropriate on the action needed for the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund to obtain full membership.

13 September 1996

XIV. OTHER MATTERS

Accountability in UNDP

238. The Administrator, in opening, stated that the framework for accountability presented in the report had been identified through an extensive and consultative process undertaken within UNDP with the assistance of external consultants and would provide the links among a number of individual accountability systems that had functioned well but on an individual rather than an integrated basis. One key element of the framework identified by the Administrator was the Management Review/Oversight Committee, which he had established to facilitate the process for providing assurance to the Executive Board that the UNDP accountability system operated effectively.

239. The Associate Administrator introduced the report of the Administrator on accountability in UNDP (DP/1996/35). He reiterated the commitment within UNDP to put the accountability framework in place. He highlighted a number of important elements already or soon to be in effect, including the application of the performance appraisal system at the senior levels of UNDP; the establishment of a central database to track the implementation of audit recommendations; and the issuance of biannual circulars to inform staff of accountability sanctions applied to staff performance and conduct.

240. Delegations emphasized the importance of the undertaking, citing its timeliness and necessity to enable UNDP to be more efficient, effective and credible. It was recognized by many delegations that the report presented a promising start. Several speakers requested the Administrator to ensure that the accountability system included systematic monitoring and evaluation, internal and external audit, programme and project reviews, line management

supervision and compliance throughout the organization, oversight by UNDP senior management, reporting to the Executive Board, and involvement of such bodies as the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Office for Internal Oversight Services. Accountability must underpin all UNDP operations, particularly in view of decentralization. Speakers also emphasized the importance of the relationship between the UNDP secretariat and the Executive Board. In that respect, delegations called for transparent reporting. One speaker requested more formal reporting on the implementation of the accountability framework.

241. The Executive Board approved the following decision:

96/36. Report on accountability in the United Nations Development Programme

The Executive Board

1. Notes the report of the Administrator on accountability in the United Nations Development Programme;

2. Supports the direction being pursued by the United Nations Development Programme to make it a more effective, efficient and accountable organization;

3. Requests the Administrator to report informally at each session of the Executive Board on the progress made to implement the accountability framework.

11 September 1996

242. One delegation underscored the extensive development efforts of UNDP in his country, particularly in promoting democratic changes. He also recognized with gratitude the recent visit of the Administrator. His delegation was grateful for the Executive Board's action regarding the granting of an independence bonus to his country, which would allow for the implementation of new projects. He noted the need for increased financing for countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States as well as the need for increased personnel at the regional and country levels. He expressed his support for an earlier intervention regarding the issue of decentralization of the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Conclusion of the session

243. The Executive Board concluded its work by adopting the following decision:

96/46. Overview of decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its third regular session 1996

The Executive Board

Recalls that during the third regular session 1996 it:

ITEM 1: ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Approved the agenda and work plan for its third regular session 1996 (DP/1996/L.16 and Add.1);

Approved the following schedule of future sessions of the Executive Board subject to the approval of the Committee on Conferences:

First regular session 1997: 13-17 January 1997

Second regular session 1997: 10-14 March 1997

Annual session 1997: 12-23 May 1997

Third regular session 1997: 15-19 September 1997

ITEM 2: MATTERS RELATING TO RULES OF PROCEDURE, DOCUMENTATION AND THE FUNCTIONING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Adopted decision 96/45 of 13 September 1996 on documentation;

Took note of the interim report on rules of procedure (DP/1996/CRP.12);

ITEM 3: ANNUAL WORK PLAN FOR 1997 FOR THE UNDP/UNFPA EXECUTIVE BOARD

Took note of the outlines of UNDP and UNFPA issues proposed for consideration by the Executive Board in 1997 with the comments made thereon (DP/1996/CRP.13);

UNDP SEGMENT

ITEM 4: MATTERS RELATING TO PROGRAMMING CYCLES: FOLLOW-UP TO EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION 95/26

Took note of the report on the implementation of decision 95/26 on matters relating to programming cycles (DP/1996/27);

ITEM 5: FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Adopted decision 96/44 of 13 September 1996 on the annual review of the financial situation 1995;

Took note of the annual review of net flow of contributions by donor and recipient Governments (DP/1995/28/Add.1);

Took note of the review of trust fund established by the Administrator in 1992-1994 and 1995 (DP/1996/28/Add.2);

Adopted decision 96/40 of 13 September 1996 on management, accountability and the Reserve for Field Accommodation;

Adopted decision 96/39 of 13 September 1996 on UNDP Financial Regulations and Rules;

Adopted decision 96/41 of 13 September 1996 on UNDP revised budget estimates for the biennium 1996-1997;

Took note of the report of the Advisory Committee for Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the revised budget estimates for 1995-1996 biennium and budget estimates for the 1996-1997 biennium (DP/1996/30);

Adopted decision 96/35 of 10 September 1996 on the Inter-Agency Procurement and Services Office;

Took note of the report on the United Nations system regular and extra-budgetary technical cooperation expenditures (DP/1996/32 and Add.1);

Took note of the report on follow-up information pertaining to cost segments at headquarters in New York (DP/1996/37);

Took note of the report on follow-up to decision 96/21 on support to resident coordinators (DP/1996/CRP.18);

Took note of the follow-up information on the financial situation (DP/1996/CRP.19);

ITEM 6: UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR PROJECT SERVICES

Adopted decision 96/37 of 11 September 1996 on the United Nations Office for Project Services revised budget estimates for the biennium 1996-1997 (DP/1996/36);

Took note of the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the United Nations Office for Project Services revised budget estimates for the biennium 1996-1997 (DP/1996/38);

ITEM 7: COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS

Approved the first country cooperation framework for the People's Republic of China (DP/CCF/CPR/1);

Approved the first country cooperation framework for Viet Nam (DP/CCF/VIE/1);

Adopted decision 96/42 of 13 September 1996 on the global cooperation framework;

ITEM 8: UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN

Adopted decision 96/43 of 13 September 1996 on the United Nations Development Fund for Women;

UNDP/UNFPA SEGMENT

ITEM 9: UNFPA/UNDP: HARMONIZATION OF PRESENTATION OF BUDGETS AND ACCOUNTS

Took note of the oral report of the Administrator of UNDP and the Executive Director of UNFPA;

ITEM 10: REPORT ON FIELD VISIT OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Took note of the report of the field visits of the Executive Board to Malawi and Mozambique (DP/1996/CRP.14);

UNFPA SEGMENT

ITEM 11: UNFPA: FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Took note of the annual financial review, 1995 (DP/FPA/1996/22);

ITEM 12: UNFPA: COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS

Approved assistance to the Government of Honduras (DP/FPA/CP/154);

Approved assistance to the Government of Sri Lanka (DP/FPA/CP/155);

Approved assistance to the Government of Tunisia (DP/FPA/CP/156);

Approved assistance to the Palestinian People (DP/FPA/CP/157);

Approved assistance to the Government of Viet Nam (DP/FPA/CP/158);

Approved assistance to the Government of Cambodia (DP/FPA/CP/159);

Approved assistance to the Government of Zimbabwe (DP/FPA/CP/160);

Approved request for extension of, and additional resources for, the UNFPA country programme for Cuba (DP/FPA/1996/23);

Approved request for extension of, and additional resources for, the UNFPA country programme for Madagascar (DP/FPA/1996/24);

Approved request for extension of, and additional resources for, the UNFPA country programme for Bolivia (DP/FPA/1996/25);

Approved request and additional resources for the UNFPA country programme for Ethiopia (DP/FPA/1996/26);

ITEM 13: UNFPA: INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION IN HEALTH POLICY AND PROGRAMMING

Adopted decision 96/38 of 13 September 1996 on inter-agency coordination in health policy and programming;

ITEM 14: OTHER MATTERS

Adopted decision 96/36 of 11 September 1996 on the report on accountability in UNDP.

13 September 1996

EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UNDP/UNFPA

ALLOCATION OF SUBJECTS FOR FIRST REGULAR SESSION (13-17 JANUARY 1997)

Item 1. Organizational matters

- Annual work plan 1997
- Rules of procedure

UNDP segment

Item 2. Country cooperation frameworks and related matters

- Country cooperation frameworks
- Regional and global cooperation frameworks
- Report on assistance to Myanmar (96/01)

Item 3. Financial, budgetary and administrative matters

- Audit reports (95/3)
- Implementation of decision 96/40 on management, accountability and the Reserve for Field Accommodation
- Report on the accountability system of UNDP

Item 4. United Nations Development Fund for Women

UNDP/UNFPA segment

Item 5. Harmonization of presentation of budgets and accounts **(written report)**

UNFPA segment

Item 6. Country programmes and related matters

Item 7. Financial, budgetary and administrative matters

Audit reports

Item 8. Other matters

Annex I

DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD IN 1996

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96/1. Assistance to Myanmar

The Executive Board

1. Approves continued funding of activities in the sectors previously outlined in Governing Council decision 93/21;

2. Authorizes the Administrator, on a project-by-project basis, to approve projects for a total amount not exceeding $52.076 million during the period 1996-1997;

3. Requests the Administrator to submit, at its first regular session 1997 and at its first regular session 1998, an assessment of the extent to which the assistance provided to Myanmar continues to meet the provisions of present Executive Board decisions, including Governing Council decision 93/21.

16 January 1996

96/2. Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office (IAPSO)

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the Administrator on the activities of the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office (DP/1996/7) and expresses appreciation for the important inter-agency cooperation work undertaken by the Office within the framework of the Inter-Agency Procurement Working Group, which has proven to have an important impact on programme deliveries, economy of operations and transparency in the use of public funds;

2. Reaffirms that under its mandate for research and development on procurement-related matters for the United Nations system, the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office shall continue to promote inter-agency cooperation and coordination, where possible finding ways of making such activities self-financing;

3. Also reaffirms that, under its mandate for procurement services, the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office shall continue to provide a full range of such procurement services to the organizations of the United Nations system and to partners in development outside the United Nations system, including non-governmental organizations, Governments and government agencies, building upon the capacity it has developed in common-user items, as defined by the Inter-Agency Procurement Working Group, and other product groups for which the Administrator shall determine that the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office has the requisite capacity;

4. Encourages the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office to seek ways of coordinated procurement arrangements with United Nations entities to draw on respective strengths of each entity and thus provide better services to the development community, and in particular to programme countries;

5. Requests the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office to present a consolidated biennial report to the Executive Board on its activities, including direct procurement, and to provide a full statistical report on United Nations system procurement at its third regular session 1996;

6. Confirms paragraphs 41 to 43 of its decision 95/28 with regard to the 1996-1997 biennial budget for the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office, including the modified staffing table and revised grade structures of IAPSO.

17 January 1996

96/3. Global contraceptive commodity programme

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report, as contained in document DP/FPA/1996/3, and of the comments made during the Executive Board session;

2. Endorses the establishment of a global contraceptive commodity programme, to be managed by the United Nations Population Fund, and funded with an initial capitalization of $5 million, as set out in paragraph 23 of document DP/FPA/1996/3, as an integral component of the overall work of the Fund in strengthening reproductive health programmes, including family planning and sexual health, and emphasizes that these activities should be monitored carefully to ensure that they adhere to technical standards of safety and quality;

3. Requests the Executive Director to submit an annual progress report on the activities and the management of the global contraceptive commodity programme to the Executive Board, paying particular attention to the progress in strengthening national capacities to deal with the logistical aspects of contraceptive procurement;

4. Requests the Executive Director to engage in further appropriate collaboration and coordination with other relevant United Nations entities, in particular, the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office and the World Health Organization, active in the fields of procurement and reproductive health;

5. Requests the Executive Director to arrange an overall independent and external evaluation of the global contraceptive commodity programme at a time to be decided by the Executive Board, particularly with regard to its impact on national capacity-building in order to provide the Board with the information required to make a decision on whether the programme should be continued or ended.

19 January 1996

96/4. United Nations technical cooperation activities

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General (DP/1996/8);

2. *Invites* the Department for Development Support and Management Services, the United Nations Development Programme and other United Nations entities and departments to give further attention to strengthened programmatic linkages within their respective mandates;

3. *Recommends* that the United Nations Development Programme consider including in its evaluation work plan an evaluation of the activities of the Department for Development Support and Management Services that it finances, including a value-for-money audit.

19 January 1996

96/5. Preparation of reports for the Economic and Social Council substantive session 1996

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme contained in document DP/1996/9, and of the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund contained in document DP/FPA/1996/6, and the comments made thereon;

2. *Urges* the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund to ensure that their reports to the Economic and Social Council substantive session 1996 fully address issues to be discussed in accordance with relevant decisions and resolutions of the Council and the General Assembly, including Council resolutions 1995/50, 1995/51 and 1995/56 and General Assembly resolution 50/120;

3. *Requests* that the content of the reports of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund for the Economic and Social Council substantive session 1996 be such as to enable the Council to compare achievements made by each organization and to identify problems and recommend appropriate actions, on issues relating to, *inter alia*, allocation of resources, harmonization of procedures and budget presentation, common administrative services and premises and monitoring and evaluation;

4. *Requests* the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, together with the Executive Directors of the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme, to agree on a common format and structure for their reports for the Economic and Social Council substantive session 1996, taking into account paragraph 2 of the present decision.

19 January 1996

96/6. Documentation

The Executive Board

1. Recalls the importance of strict observance of the resolutions and rules establishing language arrangements for the different bodies and organs of the United Nations, in particular General Assembly resolution 50/11;

2. Requests the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund to establish a working group on document distribution issues, in collaboration with the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund, with the participation of the departments concerned and in association with representatives of the linguistic groups;

3. Requests the Administrator to submit a report to the Executive Board at its annual session 1996 on the status of this issue and to propose concrete solutions.

19 January 1996

96/7. Implementation of the successor programming arrangements

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report contained in document DP/1996/3, of comments made by delegations thereon, and of the clarifications provided by the Administrator during the discussions of the report and requests the Administrator to ensure that the guidelines be in full conformity with those clarifications, which will also be contained in the report of the first regular session 1996, and that the revised guidelines be submitted to the Executive Board as soon as possible, and no later than at the annual session 1996;

2. Reaffirms that the country cooperation framework is the central document in the country programming process and that the recipient Government has the primary responsibility for the formulation of the framework, in consultation with the United Nations Development Programme, as well as for the coordination of all types of external assistance, in order to integrate the assistance effectively into its development process;

3. Stresses the importance it attaches to the mechanisms for coordination at the country level established in General Assembly resolutions 47/199 and 50/120 and reaffirms that the country cooperation framework should be formulated in accordance with those resolutions;

4. Notes that the country cooperation framework should be based on a realistic estimate of income from both core and non-core resources;

5. Requests the Administrator to submit, in a timely manner, the country cooperation framework as formulated by the country concerned, in consultation with the United Nations Development Programme, to the Executive Board for

approval. The country cooperation framework should be based on national plans and priorities, country-specific circumstances and lessons learnt from previous cooperation as well as the mandate and programme priorities of the United Nations Development Programme. The country cooperation framework shall outline the overall strategy proposed for United Nations Development Programme cooperation. The country cooperation framework should set measurable targets where possible for the results and impact expected as well as outline management arrangements for execution and implementation, coordination, monitoring and review as well as a resource mobilization strategy and target for all resources managed by the United Nations Development Programme;

6. Decides that country cooperation frameworks shall be approved as submitted, without presentation and discussion, unless at least five members have informed the secretariat in writing before the meeting of their wish to bring a particular country cooperation framework before the Executive Board. The secretariat shall inform all members of the Board of which country cooperation frameworks will be presented to the Board;

7. Requests the Administrator to submit to the Executive Board at its annual session 1996 a proposed format and timing for review reports, based on information generated from the new system for programme monitoring, periodic review and oversight, the actual assignment of resources, available relevant evaluations and the periodic review of the operational activities of every country office, that will enable the Board to review the actual implementation of the country cooperation framework in each country and lessons learnt as part of the preparation for the next country cooperation framework;

8. Decides that the Administrator shall submit the review reports to the Executive Board, highlighting a representative sample of reports covering a range of programmes that are representative in terms of quality and geography. If necessary, the Board will then provide guidance on future programming. The agreed outcome of the Executive Board review should be a fully integrated part of the preparation for the next country cooperation framework;

9. Requests the Administrator to make available to members of the programme, on a regular basis, lists of available reports on periodic reviews and evaluations of country-programme activities;

10. Decides that the arrangements described above shall take immediate effect, except those contained in paragraph 6, which shall take effect in January 1997 and will be reviewed at the annual session 1997 in light of experience gained therefrom, also taking into consideration country-programming arrangements in the United Nations Children's Fund.

19 January 1996

96/8. United Nations Development Fund for Women

The Executive Board

1. Takes note with appreciation of the information provided by the Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women regarding the improvement of the financial situation of the Fund;

2. Authorizes the United Nations Development Fund for Women, on an exceptional basis in view of the positive balance of resources, to formulate additional new projects in 1996 for a total amount not exceeding $2 million;

3. Requests that the United Nations Development Fund for Women in future submit in writing to the Executive Board, in accordance with the established rules for the submission of documentation, all proposals requiring action by the Board.

19 January 1996

96/9. South-South cooperation: UNFPA support to 'Partners in Population and Development'

The Executive Board

1. Approves the arrangements proposed to support the intergovernmental organization 'Partners in Population and Development', as outlined in the report on South-South cooperation: UNFPA support to 'Partners in Population and Development' (document DP/FPA/1996/11);

2. Invites the Partners to consider broadening the scope by actively involving other developing countries as well as countries with economies in transition in the programmes of 'Partners in Population and Development';

3. Requests the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund to report to the Executive Board at the third regular session 1998 on the activities and achievements of this initiative, including the role of UNFPA, and on the justification for further Fund involvement beyond 1998.

19 January 1996

96/10. Strategy for allocation of UNFPA country resources

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report on a new approach for the allocation of United Nations Population Fund resources to country programmes (document DP/FPA/1996/1);

2. *Decides* to continue its consideration of this agenda item at its second regular session 1996;

3. *Requests* the Executive Director to submit to the Board at its second regular session 1996 a revised document reflecting the comments made by members of the Board on the new approach for the allocation of United Nations Population Fund resources during the first regular session 1996 of the Board.

19 January 1996

96/11. *UNDP assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina*

The Executive Board

1. *Takes into account* the recent peace agreements, which foresaw the urgent need to undertake massive reconstruction and rehabilitation activities, as well as the urgent need to restart the development process in Bosnia and Herzegovina;

2. *Emphasizes* the importance of the creation of conditions conducive to the reconstruction and development of Bosnia and Herzegovina and encourages Member States to provide assistance;

3. *Takes note* of the request from the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina to receive necessary assistance from the United Nations Development Programme at this critical juncture;

4. *Welcomes* the intention of the Administrator to earmark additional funds for programming activities in 1996; and recommends that the amount should be at least $5 million, and that these funds, to the extent possible, should come from available unprogrammed Special Programme Resources. They are to be utilized for programmes developed by the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina in consultation with the United Nations Development Programme;

5. *Recommends* that, if necessary, additional funds may be allocated by borrowing against line 1.1.3: resources for development in countries in special circumstances. Such action shall not be regarded as a precedent for similar country-specific allocations, which will be based in the future on guidelines being developed for the use of this facility;

6. *Welcomes* the decision of the Administrator to establish a United Nations Development Programme country office in Bosnia and Herzegovina as soon as possible;

7. *Further requests* the Administrator to report on the progress of the implementation of the present decision at the second regular session 1996.

19 January 1996

96/12. Overview of decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its first regular session 1996

The Executive Board

Recalls that during the first regular session 1996 it:

ITEM 1: ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Elected the following Bureau for 1996:

President	H.E. Ms. Annette DES ILES (Trinidad and Tobago)
Vice-President	Mr. Rolando BAHAMONDES (Canada)
Vice-President	Mr. Bruce L. NAMAKANDO (Zambia)
Vice-President	Ms. Cecilia B. REBONG (Philippines)
Vice-President	Mr. Milan DUBCEK (Slovak Republic)

Approved the agenda and work plan for its first regular session 1996 (DP/1996/L.1);

Approved the report of the third regular session 1995 (DP/1995/54);

Agreed to the following schedule of future sessions of the Executive Board in New York subject to the approval of the Committee on Conferences:

Second regular session 1996: 25-29 March 1996

Annual session 1996: 6-17 May 1996 (Geneva)

Third regular session 1996: 9-13 September 1996

(Note: 16 May is an official United Nations holiday in Geneva.)

Agreed to the subjects to be discussed at these sessions as listed in the annex;

Adopted decision 96/6 of 19 January 1996 on documentation;

ITEM 2: INITIATIVES FOR CHANGE

Took note of the report of the Administrator on the follow-up to paragraph 4 of Executive Board decision 95/22 with the comments made thereon (DP/1996/2);

ITEM 3: MATTERS RELATING TO THE PROGRAMMING CYCLES

Adopted decision 96/7 of 19 January 1996 on the implementation of successor programming arrangements;

Adopted decision 96/11 of 19 January 1996 on UNDP assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina;

ITEM 4: UNDP: COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS

Adopted decision 96/1 of 16 January 1996 on assistance to Myanmar;

Took note of the extension for the fifth country programme for Fiji (DP/CP/FIJ/5/EXTENSION 1);

Took note of the extension for the fifth country programme for Tonga (DP/CP/TON/5/EXTENSION 1);

Approved the first country cooperation framework for Bangladesh (DP/CCF/BGD/1);

Took note of the programme objectives for Aruba covering the period 1994-1996 (DP/1996/5);

Took note of the programme objectives for Trinidad and Tobago covering the period 1994-1996 (DP/1996/6);

ITEM 5: REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE INTER-AGENCY PROCUREMENT SERVICES OFFICE

Adopted decision 96/2 of 17 January 1996 on the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office;

ITEM 6: UNITED NATIONS TECHNICAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES

Adopted decision 96/4 of 19 January 1996 on United Nations technical cooperation activities;

ITEM 7: UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN

Adopted decision 96/8 of 19 January 1996 on the United Nations Development Fund for Women;

ITEM 8: AGENCY SUPPORT COSTS

Agreed to postpone consideration of this item to the second regular session 1996;

ITEM 9: UNDP/UNFPA: FOLLOW-UP TO AND PREPARATION FOR THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Adopted decision 96/5 of 19 January 1996 on follow-up to and preparations for the Economic and Social Council;

ITEM 10: UNDP/UNFPA: JOINT UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON HIV/AIDS

Agreed to postpone consideration of this item to the second regular session 1996;

ITEM 11: UNFPA: STRATEGY FOR RESOURCE ALLOCATION

Adopted decision 96/10 of 19 January 1996 on the strategy for allocation of UNFPA resources;

ITEM 12: UNFPA: FUTURE ROLE OF UNFPA IN ASSESSING AND MEETING CONTRACEPTIVE REQUIREMENTS AND LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT NEEDS

Agreed to postpone consideration of this item to the second regular session 1996;

ITEM 13: UNFPA: GLOBAL CONTRACEPTIVE COMMODITY PROGRAMME

Adopted decision 96/3 of 19 January 1996 on the global contraceptive commodity programme;

ITEM 14: UNFPA: MEMBERSHIP IN THE UNICEF/WHO JOINT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH POLICY

Agreed to postpone consideration of this item to the second regular session 1996;

ITEM 15: UNFPA: COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS

Approved the interim assistance for South Africa (DP/FPA/1996/10);

Approved the additional resources for the UNFPA country programme for Mali (DP/FPA/1996/7);

Approved the additional resources for the UNFPA country programme for Uganda (DP/FPA/1996/8);

Agreed to postpone consideration of the request for the additional resources for the UNFPA country programme for Burkina Faso (DP/FPA/1996/9) to the second regular session 1996;

ITEM 16: UNFPA: SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION

Adopted decision 96/9 of 19 January 1996 on UNFPA support to 'Partners in Population and Development';

ITEM 17: OTHER MATTERS

Took note of the presentation by the Administrator of UNDP on the Global Mechanism of the Convention to Combat Desertification (DP/1996/CRP.1) and the comments made thereon.

19 January 1996

Annex

ALLOCATION OF SUBJECTS FOR FUTURE SESSIONS

The following subjects are scheduled for consideration at future sessions:

Second regular session (25-29 March 1996)

Item 1. Organizational matters

UNFPA segment

Item 2. UNFPA: Strategy for allocation of UNFPA resources (96/4)

Item 3. UNFPA: Country programmes and related matters

Item 4. UNFPA: Effectiveness of the UNFPA publications programme (95/35)

Item 5. UNFPA: Role of UNFPA in assessing and meeting contraceptive requirements and logistics management needs (95/21)

Item 6. UNFPA: Membership in the UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy (95/15)

UNFPA/UNDP segment

Item 7. UNFPA/UNDP: Harmonization of presentation of budget and accounts (oral report)

Item 8. UNFPA/UNDP: Joint and Co-Sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

UNDP segment

Item 9. UNDP: Agency support costs (DP/1995/49)

Item 10. UNDP: Country programmes and related matters (mid-term reviews)

Item 11. UNDP: Financial, budgetary and administrative matters: Follow-up to Executive Board decision 95/28 (§ 14, § 36, § 37)

Item 12. UNDP: Evaluation (92/2, § 3)

Item 13. UNDP: Assistance to the Palestinian people (92/2, § 3)

Item 14. Other matters (including report on field visit)

Annual session (6-17 May 1996 - Geneva)

- Organizational matters
- Rules of procedures

UNFPA segment

- Report of the Executive Director and programme-level activities
- Mission statement of UNFPA

UNFPA/UNDP segment

- Reports to the Economic and Social Council
- Harmonization of presentation of budget and accounts

UNDP segment

- Annual report of the Administrator and related matters (including initiatives for change)
- Matters relating to the programming cycles:
    - Implementation of the new programming arrangements: interim report
- United Nations Volunteers (92/2, § 5)
- United Nations Development Fund for Women
- United Nations Office for Project Services

Third regular session (9-13 September 1996)

- Organizational matters

UNFPA segment

- Financial, budgetary and administrative matters
- Country programmes and related matters

UNFPA/UNDP segment

- Harmonization of presentation of budgets and accounts
- Reports on field visits

UNDP segment

- Matters relating to programming cycles: follow-up to Executive Board decisions 95/23 and 95/26
- Country programmes and related matters
- Financial, budgetary and administrative matters
- United Nations Development Fund for Women
    - Follow-up to Executive Board decisions 95/18 and 95/32
- Report on the activities of the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office

1997 sessions

First regular session 1997	13-17 January 1997
Second regular session 1997	10-14 March 1997
Annual session 1997	5-16 May 1997
Third regular session 1997	15-19 September 1997

96/13. Future country programming process of the United Nations Population Fund

The Executive Board

1. Invites the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund to consider ways of harmonizing the country programming process of the Fund with that of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund. In this context, the Executive Director should review the format for, content and timing of as well as the mode of discussion of the documentation submitted to the Executive Board on country activities;

2. Requests the Executive Director to submit to Member States, after consultations with the United Nations Development Programme and United Nations Children's Fund, recommendations on the future country programming process of the United Nations Population Fund based on the results of the above considerations and reviews, no later than at the annual session 1997 of the Executive Board.

26 March 1996

96/14. Role of the United Nations Population Fund in assessing and meeting contraceptive requirements and logistics management needs

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the Executive Director on the future role of the United Nations Population Fund in assessing and meeting the unmet needs for contraceptives and the requirements for logistics management (DP/FPA/1996/2);

2. Endorses the proposed future activities of the Global Initiative on Contraceptive Requirements and Logistics Management Needs in the Developing Countries in the 1990s;

3. Requests the Executive Director to submit a progress report on the activities of the Global Initiative as part of her annual report.

26 March 1996

96/15. Allocation of resources to country programmes of the United Nations Population Fund

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the Executive Director on a revised approach for the allocation of the resources of the United Nations Population Fund to country programmes (DP/FPA/1996/15) and of the comments made thereon by the Executive Board;

2. Reaffirms the commitments demonstrated by Member States in the context of adhering to the principles in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development;

3. Also reaffirms that, in order to achieve the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development, there is a need for adequate mobilization of resources at the national and international levels as well as of new and additional resources to developing countries from all sources, including multilateral, bilateral and private sources, and calls upon those countries in a position to do so to increase their contributions to the United Nations Population Fund;

4. Endorses the approach for resource allocation contained in the report, including the indicators and threshold levels towards meeting the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development for the year 2005;

5. Also endorses, in this context, the flexible approach to the allocation of relative shares of resources to the new categories of countries as well as to the distribution of resources to individual countries in line with the section of the report entitled "Distribution of resources to individual countries";

6. Decides that the United Nations Population Fund, while using this flexible approach, should give special attention to the least developed countries, low-income countries and Africa;

7. Also decides that the United Nations Population Fund in distributing resources to individual countries within each category should use per capita gross national product as a criterion as well as other appropriate indicators of the level of development of a country;

8. Further decides that the allocation of resources should be based on a comprehensive assessment of the actual needs and requirements of countries, and should take fully into consideration coherent national programmes, plans and strategies on population and development and the need for external resources to complement national financial efforts in the area of population and development;

9. Endorses the procedure for categorization of countries into groups A, B and C as outlined in the report and approves the following relative shares of resources: 67-69 per cent to Group A, 22-24 per cent to Group B, 5-7 per cent to Group C and 3-4 per cent to countries with economies in transition, on a temporary basis, and 0.5 per cent to other countries;

10. Recognizes that some countries may still continue to require programme support in selected thematic areas to assure that the gains already made are not compromised by adverse economic situations;

11. Also recognizes the need to address the problems of significant social sectors and areas not reflected in national average indicators;

12. Reaffirms that the United Nations Population Fund should continue to promote and strengthen South-South cooperation in all groups of countries, both within and between regions;

13. Recommends that the revised approach for resource allocation be introduced in a phased manner, taking into account both the stage of the current cycle of assistance and the status of programme implementation in individual countries;

14. Recommends that the Executive Director undertake a quinquennial review of the system for resource allocation, including a performance assessment of the indicators and their threshold levels, and to report thereon to the Executive Board starting in the year 2000;

15. Requests the Executive Director to provide information in the annual report of the Fund on the level of allocations and disbursements to the categories of countries in line with the revised approach, as well as information on the allocations and disbursements of resources to regions, least developed countries and low-income countries;

16. Also requests the United Nations Population Fund to continue the methodological work needed to further develop indicators for the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development that would be of practical value in serving to assist in allocating resources, including indicators measuring the integration of all components of reproductive health and family planning services.

27 March 1996

96/16. Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)

The Executive Board

1. Welcomes the reports prepared and the oral presentations made by the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Development Programme covering their support to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), in particular at the country level, and reaffirms the importance of collective and concerted action on HIV/AIDS by all the co-sponsoring agencies and coordinated through the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS;

2. Requests the United Nations Development Programme to conclude without delay arrangements with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS relating to the financial, administrative and logistical support to work in the area of HIV/AIDS as well as to clarify the role and function of the national programme officers appointed to provide support to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS in accordance with Executive Board decision 94/6;

3. Recommends that the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS be given the opportunity to brief the Executive Board on its activities during the joint UNDP/UNFPA segment at the annual session 1996.

28 March 1996

96/17. Inter-agency coordination in health policy and programming

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the background note on possible membership of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund in the Joint Committee on Health Policy of the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Health Organization (DP/FPA/1996/5);

2. Reaffirms the need for close collaboration at all levels among the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Population Fund on matters of mutual interest and related activities, including, *inter alia*, issues relating to follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development;

3. Encourages the Executive Director to explore ways to further strengthen inter-agency coordination in the area of health policy and programming, in particular with the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Health Organization, in order to develop coordinated health policies and programmes, including reproductive health, in the context of the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development;

4. Invites the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund to present an oral report to the Executive Board at its third regular session in 1996 on steps undertaken to implement the present decision.

28 March 1996

96/18. Publications programme of the United Nations Population Fund

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the Executive Director on the effectiveness of the publications programme of the United Nations Population Fund (DP/FPA/1996/14) and reaffirms the importance of information and advocacy activities that should enable the promotion of increased awareness and better understanding of Fund activities;

2. Also takes note of the efforts undertaken by the United Nations Population Fund to make most of its publications available in different languages and requests the Executive Director also to take into consideration

the linguistic balances in developing the electronic dissemination of information;

3. Encourages the Executive Director to give special attention to the needs of the Information and External Relations Division publications programme to support information, education and communication efforts at the national and local levels with appropriate means;

4. Requests the Executive Director, in order to strengthen the publications of the United Nations Population Fund, to further develop policy and strategy in the area of communication and information, in the context of the role of the United Nations Population Fund in advocacy and in consultation with the members of the Board as well as with observers and non-governmental organizations, which takes account of the need to prioritize its publications with special attention to the content of other publications of the United Nations and the financial and human constraints of the Fund;

5. Also requests the Executive Director to submit to the Executive Board the strategy referred to in paragraph 4 above prior to the session that will examine the biennial budget estimates for 1998-1999 for administrative and programme support services;

6. Further requests the Executive Director to present in the document concerning the presentation of the biennial budget estimates for 1998-1999 detailed costs of publications, including information on the distribution of publications;

7. Requests the Executive Director to examine and to propose to the Executive Board recommendations to facilitate the timely collection and dissemination of current data contained in the Inventory of Population Projects in Developing Countries Around the World and of the Guide to Sources of International Population Assistance.

28 March 1996

96/19. Programme of assistance to the Palestinian People

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the Administrator (DP/1996/15);

2. Requests the Administrator to envisage increasing the core resources of the United Nations Development Programme allocated to the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People under the future arrangements for the period 1997-1998;

3. Encourages the international donor community to continue its high level of contributions to the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People and to take full advantage of the Programme's well-tested implementation and delivery capacities.

29 March 1996

96/20. UNDP evaluation

The Executive Board

1. Recognizes the importance of evaluation and monitoring as mechanisms providing information on the operational progress and impact of United Nations Development Programme activities for all participants in the activities of the Programme, for all Programme staff and for the Executive Board;

2. Stresses the fundamental importance of feeding-back the lessons of monitoring and evaluation into planning and management in order to improve continually the quality of the organization's output, and the need for this concept to be shared by all its staff;

3. Requests the Administrator, in this context, and through the mechanism of the organizational plan, to ensure that evaluation and monitoring are firmly established in the management culture of the United Nations Development Programme by, inter alia:

(a) Raising the profile of accountability and of staff and programme performance monitoring and evaluation in the Programme so that all its divisions recognize its vital importance;

(b) Reviewing and revising, as necessary, and in the light of "initiatives for change" and the successor programming arrangements, the systems and criteria for selecting subjects for evaluation; the handling in evaluations of the Programme's operational implementation of its areas of focus; opportunities for joint evaluations with other United Nations bodies; and the actions required of Programme personnel, including clear objective-setting at all levels;

(c) Linking compliance with monitoring and evaluation procedures with the Programme's personnel management and reporting systems;

(d) Reporting the results of strategic evaluations to the Executive Board;

4. Calls upon the Administrator to ensure that evaluation work has the necessary degree of independence to carry out objective evaluations; and to report to the Executive Board at its annual session 1997 on progress made on the implementation of the present decision.

29 March 1996

96/21. UNDP: Financial, budgetary and administrative matters

The Executive Board

1. Recalls its decision 95/28 on the revised budget estimates for the biennium 1996-1997 of the United Nations Development Programme, including paragraphs 13-14 and 34-37;

2. Takes note of the information provided at the current session by the Administrator, and of the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (DP/1996/25) as well as of the statement of the Administrator;

3. Takes note of the final allocation of five posts (paragraphs 13 and 14 of Executive Board decision 95/28) as proposed by the Administrator;

4. Requests the Administrator to report to the Executive Board at its third regular session 1996 on efforts to follow up on General Assembly resolution 50/120 on the triennial policy review, in particular paragraph 38 thereof, in which the General Assembly invited the United Nations system, including the funds and programmes, specialized agencies and the secretariat, to provide, as appropriate, support to the resident coordinator system, in view of the fact that the Office of United Nations System Support and Services is serving as the focal point in support of the resident coordinator system;

5. Requests the Administrator to review, as appropriate, the proposed organizational structure of the Office of United Nations System Support and Services, taking into account the comments made by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and to report thereon at its third regular session 1996, in the context of the report on the revised budget estimates;

6. Decides in view of the issues raised in paragraphs 4-5 above, to approve on a provisional basis the proposal relating to the Office of United Nations System Support and Services as contained in paragraph 164-166 of document DP/1995/51;

7. Requests the Administrator, in the context of paragraph 6 above, to bear in mind the necessity of further clarification on the financing of the responsibility given by the Secretary-General to the Administrator for improving the coordination of operational activities for development as well as the ongoing reform process of operational activities;

8. Requests the Administrator to bring the present decision to the attention of the funds and programmes, specialized agencies, and United Nations Secretariat.

29 March 1996

96/22. UNDP communication and information programme

The Executive Board

1. *Reaffirms* the importance of public information and advocacy measures to promote increased awareness and better understanding of the activities of the United Nations Development Programme;

2. *Requests* the Administrator in this context to take into consideration accessibility and the linguistic balances, including the development of the electronic dissemination of information;

3. *Encourages* the Administrator to present an information and publication policy, in the context of the mandate of the United Nations Development Programme and in consultation with the members of the Programme, so that account will be taken of the need to prioritize its publications with special attention to the risk of duplication with other publications of the United Nations and the financial and human constraints of the Programme;

4. *Requests* the Administrator to submit to the Executive Board prior to examination of the biennial budget estimates for 1998-1999, the policy document referred to in paragraph 3 above;

5. *Further requests* the Administrator to present in the document of the biennial budget estimates for 1998-1999 the detailed costs of publications and of their distribution.

29 March 1996

96/23. Agency support costs

The Executive Board

1. *Requests* the Administrator to prepare a conference room paper on the agency support costs system;

2. *Decides* that the Executive Board will consider the proposals contained in documents DP/1996/13 and DP/1995/49 and the additional information requested in paragraph 1 above at its annual session 1996.

29 March 1996

96/24. Overview of decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its second regular session 1996

The Executive Board

Recalls that during the second regular session 1996 it:

ITEM 1: ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Approved the agenda and work plan for its second regular session 1996 (DP/1996/L.6 and Corr.1);

Approved the report of the first regular session 1996 (DP/1996/11);

Approved the following schedule of future sessions of the Executive Board subject to the approval of the Committee on Conferences:

Annual session 1996: 6-17 May 1996 - Geneva

Third regular session 1996: 9-13 September 1996

First regular session 1997: 13-17 January 1997

Second regular session 1997: 10-14 March 1997

Annual session 1997: 5-16 May 1997 - New York

Third regular session 1997: 15-19 September 1997*

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* Subject to authorization by the General Assembly.

Agreed to the subjects to be discussed at the next two sessions as listed in the annex;

ITEM 2: UNFPA: STRATEGY FOR ALLOCATION OF UNFPA RESOURCES

Adopted decision 96/15 of 27 March 1996 on the allocation of resources to UNFPA country programmes;

ITEM 3: UNFPA: COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

Adopted decision 96/13 of 26 March 1996 on the future country programming process of UNFPA;

Approved the UNFPA country programme for Cape Verde (DP/FPA/CP/153);

Approved the UNFPA country programme for Ghana (DP/FPA/CP/151);

Approved the UNFPA country programme for Chad (DP/FPA/CP/150);

Approved the extension of, and additional resources for, the UNFPA country programme for the Congo (DP/FPA/1996/16);

Approved the UNFPA country programme for the Syrian Arab Republic (DP/FPA/CP/152);

Approved the extension of, and additional resources for, the UNFPA country programme for Bolivia (DP/FPA/1996/12);

ITEM 4: UNFPA: EFFECTIVENESS OF THE UNFPA PUBLICATIONS PROGRAMME

Adopted decision 96/18 of 28 March 1996 on the UNFPA publications programme;

ITEM 5: UNFPA: ROLE OF UNFPA IN ASSESSING AND MEETING CONTRACEPTIVE REQUIREMENTS AND LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT NEEDS

Adopted decision 96/14 of 26 March 1996 on the role of UNFPA in assessing and meeting contraceptive requirements and logistics management needs;

ITEM 6: UNFPA: MEMBERSHIP IN THE UNICEF/WHO JOINT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH POLICY

Adopted decision 96/17 of 28 March 1996 on inter-agency coordination in health policy and programming;

ITEM 7: UNFPA/UNDP: HARMONIZATION OF PRESENTATION OF BUDGETS AND ACCOUNTS

Took note of the oral report of the Administrator and the Executive Director on the harmonization of presentation of budgets and accounts and the comments made thereon;

ITEM 8: UNFPA/UNDP: JOINT AND CO-SPONSORED UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON HIV/AIDS

Adopted decision 96/16 of 28 March 1996 on the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS);

ITEM 9: UNDP: AGENCY SUPPORT COSTS

Adopted decision 96/23 of 29 March 1996 on agency support costs;

ITEM 10: UNDP: COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS

Took note of the overview report on mid-term reviews (DP/1996/12) and the comments made thereon;

Took note of the mid-term review of the fourth country programme for Mozambique (DP/1996/12/Add.1);

Took note of the mid-term review of the fifth country programme for the Lao People's Democratic Republic (DP/1996/12/Add.2);

Took note of the mid-term review of the first country programme for the Republic of Yemen (DP/1996/12/Add.3);

Took note of the mid-term review of the fifth country programme for Brazil (DP/1996/12/Add.4);

Took note of the mid-term review of the fifth country programme for Romania (DP/1996/12/Add.5);

Took note of the oral report on follow-up to Executive Board decision 96/11 on UNDP assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina;

ITEM 11: UNDP: FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Adopted decision 96/21 of 29 March 1996 on UNDP financial, budgetary and administrative matters;

ITEM 12: UNDP: EVALUATION

Adopted decision 96/20 of 29 March 1996 on evaluation;

ITEM 13: UNDP: ASSISTANCE TO THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

Adopted decision 96/19 of 29 March 1996 on UNDP assistance to the Palestinian people;

ITEM 14: OTHER MATTERS

Agreed to forego a decision on the draft report of the Secretary-General on enhancing the internal oversight mechanisms in operational funds and services at the current meeting and that the report of the Executive Board will reflect fully the statements made and the positions of all the members of the Board on the current matter;

Adopted decision 96/22 of 29 March 1996 on UNDP communication and information programme;

Took note of the report on the field visit to China.

29 March 1996

Annex

ALLOCATION OF SUBJECTS FOR FUTURE SESSIONS

The following subjects are scheduled for consideration at future sessions:

Annual session (6-17 May 1996 - Geneva)

Item 1. Organizational matters

Item 2. Rules of procedures

UNFPA segment

Item 3. Report of the Executive Director and programme-level activities

Item 4. Mission statement of UNFPA

UNFPA/UNDP segment

Item 5. Reports to the Economic and Social Council

Item 6. Harmonization of presentation of budgets and accounts

UNDP segment

Item 7. Annual report of the Administrator and related matters (including Initiatives for change)

Item 8. Matters relating to the programming cycles:

- Implementation of the new programming arrangements: interim report

Item 9. Agency support costs

Item 10. United Nations Volunteers

Item 11. United Nations Development Fund for Women

Item 12. United Nations Office for Project Services

Item 13. Other matters

Third regular session (9-13 September 1996)

- Organizational matters

UNFPA segment

- Financial, budgetary and administrative matters
- Country programmes and related matters

UNFPA/UNDP segment

- Harmonization of presentation of budgets and accounts
- Reports on field visits

UNDP segment

- Matters relating to programming cycles: Follow-up to Executive Board decisions 95/23 and 95/26
- Country programmes and related matters
- Financial, budgetary and administrative matters
- United Nations Development Fund for Women
    - Follow-up to Executive Board decisions 95/18 and 95/32
- Report on the activities of the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office

1997 sessions

First regular session 1997	13-17 January 1997
Second regular session 1997	10-14 March 1997
Annual session 1997	5-16 May 1997
Third regular session 1997	15-19 September 1997*

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* Subject to authorization by the General Assembly.

96/25. Matters relating to rules of procedure, documentation and the functioning of the Executive Board

The Executive Board

A. Rules of procedure

1. Decides to convene an open-ended ad hoc working group on rules of procedure for the Executive Board and requests the Secretary of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund to assist and support the consultations, *inter alia*, through the preparation of adequate documentation;

2. Requests the President of the Executive Board to report to the Executive Board at its third regular session 1996 on the progress achieved during the process with a view to reaching a final decision on rules of procedure at the first regular session of the Executive Board in January 1997;

B. Working group on documentation

3. Takes note of the interim report of the working group on documentation and the comments made thereon by the Executive Board at its annual session 1996 and encourages the working group on documentation to finalize its work and present a report, including recommendations, to the Executive Board at its third regular session 1996;

C. Functioning of the Executive Board

4. Emphasizes the need to ensure that the approach to the working methods of the Executive Board continue to be flexible and practical;

5. Decides to introduce an annual work plan for the Executive Board and requests the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund to prepare, for the third regular session, an outline of issues that could be considered by the Board in 1997, based on previous deliberations of the Board and the organizational priorities and objectives set for 1997, with a view to adopting a work plan for the Board at the first regular session 1997, based on the proposals made on this matter by delegations during the annual session 1996;

6. Recognizes the need for further work to be done on improving the quality and relevance of documentation submitted to the Board and to review the agenda of the Board in order to focus deliberations at each session of the Executive Board.

15 May 1996

96/26. Work plan of the United Nations Population Fund for 1997-2000 and programme expenditure authority

The Executive Board

1. Endorses the programme resource planning proposals of the Executive Director set out in paragraphs 7 to 18 of document DP/FPA/1996/18;

2. Approves the request for the 1997 programme expenditure authority at a level equal to new programmable resources for 1997, currently estimated at $257 million;

3. Endorses the use of the following estimates of new programmable resources from regular resources for the 1998-2000 period: $279 million for 1998; $305 million for 1999; and $334 million for 2000;

4. Also endorses the use of the following estimates of new programmable resources from multi-bilateral funding: $15 million per year for the years 1997-2000.

8 May 1996

96/27. UNFPA: Enhancing the absorptive capacity and financial resource utilization in recipient countries, in particular in Africa

The Executive Board

1. Acknowledges the problem of absorptive capacity and financial resource utilization relating to population programmes in recipient countries, particularly in most African countries, especially the least-developed countries, as noted in the discussions on the reports of the Executive Director (DP/FPA/1996/17 (Part I) and DP/FPA/1996/19);

2. Requests the Executive Director to thoroughly study the problem within the framework of existing United Nations Population Fund institutional structures and systems, in consultation with relevant actors, including, as appropriate, development institutions that are familiar with the programmes of the United Nations Population Fund in recipient countries, particularly those in Africa;

3. Also requests that a study, as well as other means and activities to address this problem, should focus on concrete operational measures that the United Nations Population Fund can undertake to enhance the absorptive capacity and financial resource utilization related to population programmes in recipient countries, in particular, those in Africa. The concrete measures should draw on an analysis of the problems as they are encountered, primarily at the country level;

4. Further requests the Executive Director to present to the Executive Board at its annual session 1998, at the latest, as part of the annual report,

concrete recommendations aimed at United Nations Population Fund actions to enhance the absorptive capacity and financial resource utilization in recipient countries, in particular those in Africa.

17 May 1996

96/28. Mission statement of the United Nations Population Fund

The Executive Board

Endorses the mission statement attached as an annex to the present decision, taking into account the discussions that took place during the annual session 1996 of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund, as reflected in the report on agenda item 4 of the session, in particular paragraph 84.

8 May 1996

Annex

UNFPA MISSION STATEMENT

UNFPA extends assistance to developing countries, countries with economies in transition and other countries at their request to help them address reproductive health and population issues, and raises awareness of these issues in all countries, as it has since its inception.

UNFPA's three main areas of work are: to help ensure universal access to reproductive health, including family planning and sexual health, to all couples and individuals on or before the year 2015; to support population and development strategies that enable capacity-building in population programming; to promote awareness of population and development issues and to advocate for the mobilization of the resources and political will necessary to accomplish its areas of work.

UNFPA is guided by, and promotes, the principles of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (1994). In particular, UNFPA affirms its commitment to reproductive rights, gender equality and male responsibility, and to the autonomy and empowerment of women everywhere. UNFPA believes that safeguarding and promoting these rights, and promoting the well-being of children, especially girl children, are development goals in themselves. All couples and individuals have the right to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children as well as the right to the information and means to do so.

UNFPA is convinced that meeting these goals will contribute to improving the quality of life and to the universally accepted aim of stabilizing world population. We also believe that these goals are an integral part of all efforts to achieve sustained and sustainable social and economic development that meets human needs, ensures well-being and protects the natural resources on which all life depends.

UNFPA recognizes that all human rights, including the right to development, are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, as expressed in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Vienna Declaration and the Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women and in other internationally agreed instruments.

UNFPA, as the lead United Nations organization for the follow-up and implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, is fully committed to working in partnership with governments, all parts of the United Nations system, development banks, bilateral aid agencies, non-governmental organizations and civil society. UNFPA strongly supports the United Nations Resident Coordinator system and the implementation of all relevant United Nations decisions.

UNFPA will assist in the mobilization of resources from both developed and developing countries, following the commitments made by all countries in the Programme of Action to ensure that the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development are met.

96/29. Mission statement of the United Nations Development Programme

The Executive Board

Endorses the mission statement attached as an annex to the present decision, taking into account the discussions that took place during the annual session 1996 of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund, as reflected in the report on agenda item 7 of the session.

15 May 1996

Annex

MISSION STATEMENT

> ***WE THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS DETERMINED ... to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, ... to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, and for these ends ... to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples, have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims ....***
>
> **From the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations**

UNDP is part of the United Nations and upholds the vision of the United Nations Charter. It is committed to the principle that development is inseparable from the quest for peace and human security and that the United Nations must be a strong force for development as well as peace.

UNDP's mission is to help countries in their efforts to achieve sustainable human development by assisting them to build their capacity to design and carry out development programmes in poverty eradication, employment creation and sustainable livelihoods, the empowerment of women and the protection and regeneration of the environment, giving first priority to poverty eradication.

UNDP also acts to help the United Nations family to become a unified and powerful force for sustainable human development and works to strengthen international cooperation for sustainable human development.

UNDP, at the request of governments and in support of its areas of focus, assists in building capacity for good governance, popular participation, private and public sector development and growth with equity, stressing that national plans and priorities constitute the only viable frame of reference for the national programming of operational activities for development within the United Nations system.

UNDP resident representatives normally serve as resident coordinators of the operational activities of the United Nations system, supporting at the request of governments the coordination of development and humanitarian assistance. Resident coordinators also help to orchestrate the full intellectual and technical resources of the United Nations system in support of national development.

UNDP strives to be an effective development partner for the United Nations relief agencies, working to sustain livelihoods while they seek to sustain lives. It acts to help countries to prepare for, avoid and manage complex emergencies and disasters.

UNDP draws on expertise from around the world, including from developing countries, United Nations specialized agencies, civil society organizations and research institutes.

UNDP supports South-South cooperation by actively promoting the exchange of experience among developing countries.

UNDP supports, within its areas of focus, technology transfer, adaptation, and access to the most effective technology.

UNDP receives voluntary contributions from nearly every country in the world. UNDP seeks to ensure a predictable flow of resources to support its programmes. It provides grant funds through criteria based on universality that strongly favour low-income countries, particularly the least developed.

UNDP is politically neutral and its cooperation is impartial. It seeks to conduct its work in a manner transparent and accountable to all its stakeholders.

UNDP is committed to a process of continuing self-evaluation and reform. It aims to improve its own efficiency and effectiveness and to assist the United Nations system in becoming a stronger force for the benefit of the people and countries of the world.

UNDP will continue to support an international development cooperation framework that responds to changing global, regional and national circumstances.

96/30. Namibia: Special status equivalent to that given to least developed countries

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the note by the Administrator (DP/1996/24 and Add.1);

2. Recognizes the similarities of the economic and social development in Namibia and those of the least developed countries;

3. Decides to extend to Namibia for the next three years, starting 1997, special status equivalent to that given to least developed countries.

15 May 1996

96/31. UNDP: Agency support costs

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the reports of the Administrator contained in documents DP/1996/13, DP/1995/49 and the additional information provided on the agency support costs;

2. Reaffirms the continued relevance and importance of the original key objectives of the agency support cost arrangements, which underline that the arrangements shall serve to:

(a) Provide incentives for national execution and ensure that agency technical support services are available to Governments, particularly for nationally executed programmes/projects;

(b) Improve the upstream technical focus of agencies and reduce their administrative and operational involvement in programme/project implementation;

(c) Assign resources that will permit programme countries to exercise increased choice in programme/project implementation;

3. Welcomes the confirmation provided by agency representatives that, following implementation of decision 91/32, agency technical support to national execution as well as the technical focus of the agencies have increased;

4. Decides that, under the successor programming arrangements, the current guidelines for support costs will continue to apply and will be adjusted only to the extent necessary to:

(a) Ensure coherence with the overall procedures, programme review, monitoring and oversight system being established for the successor programming arrangements;

(b) Reflect experience with the support costs arrangements from the fifth cycle;

(c) Accommodate the more simplified system of support costs earmarking;

5. Requests the Administrator to ensure that the agency support cost arrangements become more driven by country priorities and demands within the context of United Nations Development Programme-supported programmes;

6. Also requests the Administrator to promote the relevance of and enhance the linkage of the upstream technical support by agencies to United Nations Development Programme support for national programmes;

7. Decides that the support cost facilities will be administered directly by country offices in close collaboration and consultation with the programme countries and that the facilities should be used to encourage national execution of programmes and projects; and requests the Administrator to promote the involvement of competent and competitive national and regional institutions in support for policy and programme development and technical implementation;

8. Emphasizes the importance of the flexible and notional character of the special allocations under lines 1.6 (resources for implementation), 2.2 (United Nations system support for policy and programme development), 2.3 (technical support services from United Nations specialized agencies) and takes note of the inclusion of the regional commissions in the support cost arrangements;

9. Urges the Administrator to ensure that the support of the regional commissions is focused mainly on upstream work to support national and regional programme development and requests the Administrator to inform the Board of the procedures and areas of concentration for the utilization of support for policy and programme development for regional commissions when they have been finalized;

10. Decides that in order to enhance the incentive for national execution, in accordance with paragraph 22 of document DP/1996/13, any resources assigned for implementation of programmes and projects saved through national execution will become available for additional programming by the country, including the promotion of capacity-building for national execution;

11. Decides that the United Nations Development Programme, in order to simplify the system, should reimburse the cost of administrative and support services to the five large agencies (the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the Department of Development Support and Management Services) and the United Nations Office for Project Services with a maximum of 10 per cent, which experience has shown is the present average reimbursement rate for various inputs. Should the actual costs fall below 10 per cent, only the actual costs incurred will be reimbursed;

12. Also decides in the context of paragraph 10 of the present decision that the United Nations Development Programme should ensure that agencies maintain the existing cost measurement system and that the Administrator should continue to report to the Executive Board biennially on the actual costs incurred; and provide recommendations if necessary to revise the reimbursement rate, also for individual agencies;

13. Requests that the United Nations Development Programme, in close collaboration with the specialized agencies, make every effort to ensure that the experience of individual countries is disseminated throughout the system and used for the benefit of the larger development community;

14. Encourages the specialized agencies to take all steps to enhance their cost-effectiveness and efficiency in providing administrative and support services;

15. Requests the Administrator to review recent experiences with the agency support cost arrangement at the country level building on the evaluation presented on this matter in 1994 and to report thereon, describing lessons learned and proposing various alternatives, to the Executive Board at the annual meeting 1997 in the context of the review of the successor programming arrangements;

16. Requests the Administrator to inform the specialized agencies and regional commissions of the present decision.

15 May 1996

96/32. United Nations Volunteers

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the Administrator (DP/1996/22);

2. Notes the substantial contribution of the United Nations Volunteers programme to humanitarian, peace-keeping, peace-building, human rights and rehabilitation activities as well as to poverty eradication;

3. Encourages the United Nations Volunteers to intensify participation in the full spectrum of development, humanitarian and peace activities of the United Nations system and its related organizations;

4. Recognizes the work being undertaken by the United Nations Volunteers through the Special Voluntary Fund in supporting community efforts;

5. Recommends that the United Nations Volunteers stand ready to cooperate with Governments and the United Nations system bodies in order to replicate successful results at the country level;

6. Stresses the need for further contributions, including through, for example, co-financing arrangements, to the Special Voluntary Fund for activities of the United Nations Volunteers, the United Nations Short-Term Advisory Resources, and the Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals and other United Nations Volunteers operations;

7. Stresses, in this connection, the importance of accountability and transparency as well as the need for timely reporting on United Nations Volunteers activities to the Executive Board;

8. Supports the United Nations Volunteers as the United Nations operational arm of the White Helmets initiative and for the effective implementation of this initiative calls upon countries in a position to do so, to provide support, including financial support, to the window in the Special Voluntary Fund of the United Nations Volunteers, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 49/139 B and 50/19 and Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/44;

9. Acknowledges the importance of the contribution made by volunteers worldwide and supports United Nations Volunteers efforts to promote further volunteer work;

10. Takes note, in this context, of the proposal of the United Nations Volunteers to consider having the International Year of Volunteers 2001 as one of the instruments to promote volunteerism.

10 May 1996

96/33. United Nations Office for Project Services

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the Executive Director (DP/1996/23);

2. Encourages the Executive Director to continue his efforts to make the United Nations Office for Project Services more innovative and cost-effective, as recommended by the Management Coordination Committee;

3. Requests that the Executive Director keep the Executive Board apprised of the operational results and financial implications of the reorganization of the United Nations Office for Project Services within the framework of future annual reports, submitted through the Management Coordination Committee.

15 May 1996

96/34. Overview of decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its annual session 1996

The Executive Board

Recalls that during its annual session 1996 it:

ITEM 1: ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Approved the agenda and work plan for its annual session 1996 (DP/1995/L.7/Rev.1);

Approved the report of the second regular session 1996 (DP/1995/17 and Corr.1);

Approved the following schedule of future sessions of the Executive Board subject to the approval of the Committee on Conferences:

Third regular session 1996:	9-13 September 1996
First regular session 1997:	13-17 January 1997
Second regular session 1997:	10-14 March 1997
Annual session 1997:	12-23 May 1997 - New York
Third regular session 1997:	15-19 September 1997

Agreed to the subjects to be discussed at the third session 1996 and first session 1997 as listed in the annex;

ITEM 2: RULES OF PROCEDURE

Adopted decision 96/25 of 15 May 1996 on matters relating to rules of procedure, documentation and the functioning of the Executive Board;

ITEM 3: UNFPA: REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND PROGRAMME-LEVEL ACTIVITIES

Took note of the annual report of the Executive Director for 1995 (DP/FPA/1996/17 (Part I)), taking into account the views expressed by delegations during the discussion on the item as reflected in the report on the session;

Took note of the report on the status of financial implementation of country programmes and projects (DP/FPA/1996/19);

Took note of the periodic report on evaluation (DP/FPA/1996/20);

Adopted decision 96/26 of 8 May 1996 on the work plan of the United Nations Population Fund for 1997-2000 and request for programme expenditure authority;

Adopted decision 96/27 of 17 May 1996 on enhancing the absorptive capacity and financial resource utilization in recipient countries, in particular in Africa;

ITEM 4: MISSION STATEMENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND

Adopted decision 96/28 of 8 May 1996 on the mission statement of the United Nations Population Fund;

UNDP/UNFPA JOINT SEGMENT

ITEM 5: UNDP/UNFPA: REPORTS TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Took note of the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (DP/FPA/1996/17 (Part II)) and the report of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (DP/1996/18/Add.2) and agreed to transmit them, together with, as annexes: (a) the extract of the report on the annual session of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board dealing with the joint UNDP/UNFPA segment; (b) the extract of the report on the annual session of the Board dealing with the implementation of programming arrangements; and (c) the extract of the report on the second regular session 1996 of the Board dealing with evaluation;

ITEM 6: UNDP/UNFPA: HARMONIZATION OF PRESENTATION OF BUDGETS AND ACCOUNTS

Took note of the oral progress report of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund on the harmonization of presentation of budgets and accounts with the comments made thereon;

UNDP SEGMENT

ITEM 7: UNDP: ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR AND RELATED MATTERS

Took note of the annual report of the Administrator for 1995: introduction (DP/1996/18); main programme record (DP/1996/18/Add.1); reports of the Joint Inspection Unit of interest to UNDP (DP/1996/18/Add.3); and statistical annex (DP/1996/18/Add.4), taking into account the views expressed by delegations during the discussion of the item as reflected in the report on the session;

Took note of the report on the role of UNDP in the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (DP/1996/20);

Adopted decision 96/29 of 15 May 1996 on the UNDP mission statement.

ITEM 8: UNDP: MATTERS RELATING TO THE PROGRAMMING CYCLES

Took note of the report of the Administrator on the implementation of the successor programming arrangements with the comments made thereon (DP/1996/21);

Adopted decision 96/30 of 17 May 1996 extending special status to Namibia equivalent to that given to least developed countries;

ITEM 9: AGENCY SUPPORT COSTS

Adopted decision 96/31 of 15 May 1996 on the implementation of the support costs components of the successor programming arrangements;

ITEM 10: UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS

Adopted decision 96/32 of 10 May 1996 on the United Nations Volunteers;

ITEM 11: UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN

Took note of the oral report on the United Nations Development Fund for Women

ITEM 12: UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR PROJECT SERVICES

Adopted decision 96/33 of 15 May 1996 on the United Nations Office for Project Services;

ITEM 13: OTHER MATTERS

Took note of the presentation made by the UNAIDS representative.

17 May 1996

Annex

ALLOCATION OF SUBJECTS FOR FUTURE SESSIONS

The following subjects are scheduled for consideration at future sessions:

Third regular session (9-13 September 1996)

Item 1. Organizational matters

Item 2. Matters relating to rules of procedure, documentation and the functioning of the Executive Board

Item 3. Annual work plan for the Executive Board 1997

UNDP segment

Item 4. UNDP: Matters relating to programming cycles: Follow-up to Executive Board decisions 95/23 and 95/26

Item 5. UNDP: Financial, budgetary and administrative matters (including follow-up to Executive Board decision 96/21 on the Office of United Nations System Support Services and report on the activities of the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office)

Item 6. UNDP: Country programmes and related matters

Item 7. United Nations Development Fund for Women: Follow-up to Executive Board decisions 95/18 and 95/32

UNFPA/UNDP segment

Item 8. UNFPA/UNDP: Harmonization of presentation of budgets and accounts

Item 9. UNFPA/UNDP: Report on field visit to Africa

UNFPA segment

Item 10. UNFPA: Financial, budgetary and administrative matters

Item 11. UNFPA: Country programmes and related matters

Item 12. UNFPA: Oral report on inter-agency coordination in health policy and programming

Item 13. Other matters

First regular session 1997 (13-17 January 1997)

- Organizational matters
- Matters relating to rules of procedure, documentation and the functioning of the Executive Board
- Annual work plan for the Executive Board 1997

UNFPA segment

- Country programmes and related matters
- Audit reports

UNFPA/UNDP segment

- Follow-up to and preparations for the work of the Economic and Social Council (95/37)
- Harmonization of presentation of budgets and accounts

UNDP segment

- Matters relating to the programming cycle: Report on assistance to Myanmar (96/01)
- Audit reports (95/3)
- Country cooperation frameworks (95/25)
- United Nations technical cooperation activities (94/27)

96/35. Activities of the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the Administrator on the activities of the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office in 1994 and 1995, and the contribution by the Office to the coordination of procurement activities, improved transparency in operations and promotion of competition for contracts within the United Nations system;

2. Takes note of the 1995 Annual Statistical Report on procurement by the United Nations system, and welcomes the consolidated reporting of such data;

3. Recommends that the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office continue to explore ways to enter into arrangements for coordinated procurement with United Nations entities, drawing on the respective strengths of each entity.

10 September 1996

96/36. Report on accountability in the United Nations Development Programme

The Executive Board

1. Notes the report of the Administrator on accountability in the United Nations Development Programme;

2. Supports the direction being pursued by the United Nations Development Programme to make it a more effective, efficient and accountable organization;

3. Requests the Administrator to report informally at each session of the Executive Board on the progress made to implement the accountability framework.

11 September 1996

96/37. Revised budget estimates for the biennium 1996-1997 of the United Nations Office for Project Services

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the Executive Director on the revised budget estimates for the biennium 1996-1997 (DP/1996/36);

2. Takes note of the changes in financial reporting procedures that have been introduced with effect from the 1996-1997 biennium; and

3. Approves the revised budget estimates for the 1996-1997 biennium in the amount of $65,444,000.

11 September 1996

96/38. Coordination in health policy and programming

The Executive Board

1. Welcomes the oral report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund on coordination in health policy and programming;

2. Reaffirms the need for close collaboration at all levels among the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Population Fund in the area of health policy and programming, including reproductive health, and invites the UNICEF-WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy

to ensure that the United Nations Population Fund can participate in the meetings of the Joint Committee on Health Policy;

3. Requests the President of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund, with the assistance of the secretariat of the United Nations Population Fund, to ascertain the views of the Executive Boards of the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund on possible membership of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund in the Joint Committee on Health Policy;

4. Requests the President of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund to take appropriate action to enable the United Nations Population Fund secretariat to participate as an observer in the Joint Committee on Health Policy in January 1997;

5. Also requests the Executive Director to report to the Executive Board at its second regular session 1997 on the observations made in the Joint Committee on Health Policy and to make further recommendations as appropriate on the action needed for the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund to obtain full membership.

13 September 1996

96/39. UNDP Financial Regulations and Rules

The Executive Board

1. Notes the intention of the Administrator to expand the resource base for programmable activities by seeking more aggressively resources from non-governmental sources, bearing in mind the neutral and apolitical nature of United Nations Development Programme cooperation;

2. Approves the changes to the Financial Regulations as proposed in paragraph 8 of addendum 4 of the report of the Administrator on the annual review of the financial situation, 1995 (DP/1996/28/Add.4);

3. Requests the Administrator to keep the Executive Board regularly apprised of the status of the resource mobilization initiatives from non-governmental sources and to present the detailed policy of the United Nations Development Programme in this matter within the context of the comprehensive review of the whole modality of non-core resources for discussion at the first regular session 1998 in accordance with Executive Board decision 96/44;

4. Further requests the Administrator to implement the resource mobilization initiatives in accordance with the sustainable human development framework, contained in decision 94/14, and consistent with national development priorities;

5. Approves the changes to Financial Regulation 2.2 M (i), as proposed in paragraph 12 of addendum 4 of the report of the Administrator on the annual review of the financial situation, 1995 (DP/1996/28/Add.4).

13 September 1996

96/40. Management, accountability and the Reserve for Field Accommodation

The Executive Board

1. Welcomes the report contained in document DP/1996/28/Add.3 and the additional information provided to the Executive Board by the Administrator and the United Nations Board of Auditors, as well as the transparent and forthcoming manner in which information on the Reserve for Field Accommodation has been provided;

2. Notes with grave concern the failure of management oversight and control relating to the proper application of the Financial Regulations and Rules and the supervision of staff and contracted parties that have contributed to the problems outlined in document DP/1996/28/Add.3, concerning the Reserve for Field Accommodation;

3. Welcomes in this context the investigations, reviews and actions initiated so far by the United Nations Development Programme to strengthen financial and management control of the Reserve for Field Accommodation;

4. Requests the Administrator to take all necessary steps to ensure compliance with all Financial Regulations and Rules, including additional efforts in the area of training of staff in financial management and oversight;

5. Further requests the Administrator to address any structural or systemic problems relating to financial control and management supervision that have come to light as part of the investigation of the Reserve for Field Accommodation as soon as possible in order to ensure that this remains an isolated incident;

6. Urges the Administrator to finalize the investigation on the management of the Reserve for Field Accommodation as soon as possible and to ensure that within the framework of accountability, responsibility is assigned at the individual level;

7. Endorses the revised accounting treatment for the Reserve for Field Accommodation and notes with concern that the overcommitment and overexpenditure will reach a level of $62.8 million by 31 December 1996;

8. Approves the proposal of the Administrator that the activities under the Reserve for Field Accommodation in the future cover only housing premises and that office premises be handled separately, bearing in mind the need to enhance transparency of the activities covered by the Reserve for Field Accommodation and those related to office premises;

9. Reaffirms, in the context of the housing premises, the principle that, where possible, UNDP should dispose of housing units it either owns or operates under government ownership and that any future housing requirements be met together with the host country Government;

10. Requests the Administrator, in collaboration with the Joint Consultative Group on Policy partners, in the context of the implementation of paragraph 44 of General Assembly resolution 50/120 on common premises, to address and find a common understanding of how to deal with outstanding contributions as well as cost-sharing, payment and ownership relating to future constructions;

11. Further requests the Administrator to report on the implementation of the present decision at the first regular session 1997.

13 September 1996

96/41. Revised budget estimates for the biennium 1996-1997

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the comments made by delegations during the Board discussions on the revised budget estimates for the biennium 1996-1997 and of the report of the Advisory Committee for Administrative and Budgetary Questions (DP/1996/30);

2. Approves with respect to the revised budget estimates for the 1996-1997 biennium of the United Nations Development Programme and the funds administered by the Programme, contained in document DP/1996/29, a revised appropriation in the amount of $579,146,800 gross, to be allocated from the resources indicated in the table below, to finance the revised 1996-1997 biennial budget and resolves that the income estimates in the amount of $38,000,000 shall be used to offset the gross appropriation, resulting in a net appropriation of $541,146,800;

3. Also approves the proposals of the Administrator contained in paragraphs 3 and 4 of document DP/1996/29 relating to the establishment of a country office in Bosnia and Herzegovina;

4. Requests the Administrator, in the context of continuous reporting on the progress of the management of change process, to present to the Board at its second regular session 1997, an outline of the overall strategy for the budget for the biennium 1998-1999, taking into account the importance of the organizational capacity of the United Nations Development Programme, in particular the adequacy of human resources both at headquarters and country levels, for the effective support of its programme;

5. Approves the proposals of the Administrator contained in paragraphs 14 to 21 of document DP/1996/29, relating to the principles and criteria that will be used to determine the amounts to be reimbursed by host Governments as contributors towards local office costs;

6. Takes note of the reports of the Administrator on: (a) the use and status of the reserves that were established for staff separations and transitional measures; (b) pilot arrangements relating to reclassification; (c) the Office of United Nations System Support and Services; and (d) the deferment of the application of the staffing formula applied to the United Nations Volunteers;

7. Urges the Administrator to redouble his efforts to obtain more support for the Office of United Nations System Support and Services while expecting full cooperation from other bodies of the United Nations system, and to keep the Board informed of the progress made in gathering such support;

8. Requests the Administrator to bring paragraph 7 of the present decision to the attention of the United Nations funds and programmes, specialized agencies, and the Secretariat;

9. Authorizes the Administrator to maintain an accounting linkage between voluntary contributions and contributions to local office costs in such a manner that contributions are first applied against obligations towards local office costs;

10. Stresses the need for programme countries to meet in full their obligations towards the local office costs of the United Nations Development Programme;

11. Decides that in the case of countries with 1994 per capita gross national product of $4,701 and above:

(a) Where programme activities of the United Nations Development Programme exceed $12 million financed from all sources of financing over a three-year period, a resident representative and a second international staff member could be provided from the biennial budget of the Programme;

(b) Where programme activities of the United Nations Development Programme exceed $8 million financed from all sources of financing over a three-year period, a resident representative could be provided from the biennial budget of the Programme;

12. Decides that, in line with similar provisions of decision 95/23, countries exceeding the threshold of $4,701 per capita gross national product shall continue to be granted waivers for a period of three years, following the year of graduation;

13. Authorizes the Administrator to implement reclassification in the P-1 to P-5 range, provided that the aggregate effect of the changes in the classified level of posts is subject to a zero-sum limitation;

14. Decides to keep the issue of local office costs under review in the context of the budget for the biennium 1998-1999.

UNDP revised budget proposals for the 1996-1997 biennium, showing estimated extrabudgetary income from external sources

(Thousands of United States dollars)

	Appropriation estimates	Estimated extrabudgetary income	Total gross/net estimates
I. RESOURCES OF UNDP			
A. UNDP core activities[a]			
Headquarters[b]	144 321.0	36 479.4	180 800.4
Country offices	232 507.2	45 267.5	277 774.7
Gross UNDP core activities	376 828.2	81 746.9	458 575.1
Estimated income	38 000.0	0.0	38 000.0
Net UNDP core activities	338 828.2	81 746.9	420 575.1
B. Programme support and development activities			
Programme development activities	30 828.7	0.0	30 828.7
Support to the operational activities of the United Nations	96 556.3	0.0	96 556.3
Project/programme implementation services			
DSS	7 223.4	0.0	7 223.4
IAPSO	4 446.9	3 911.4	8 358.3
UNV	34 407.7	2 999.7	37 407.4
National execution	3 875.3	0.0	3 875.3
Total project/programme implementation services	49 953.3	6 911.1	56 864.4
Programme support	2 300.0	0.0	2 300.0
Total programme support and development activities	179 638.3	6 911.1	186 549.4
C. Total resources of UNDP			
Gross resources	556 466.5	88 658.0	645 124.5
Estimated income	38 000.0	0.0	38 000.0
Net resources	518 466.5	88 658.0	607 124.5
II. RESOURCES OF FUNDS			
A. UNCDF	9 207.8	0.0	9 207.8
B. UNRFNRE and UNFSTD	1 147.2	324.8	1 472.0
C. UNSO	7 030.6	1 207.3	8 237.9
D. UNIFEM	5 294.7	310.1	5 604.8
Total resources of Funds	22 680.3	1 842.2	24 522.5
III. TOTAL UNDP APPROPRIATIONS			
Gross appropriations	579 146.8	90 500.2	669 647.0
Estimated income	38 000.0	0.0	38 000.0
Net UNDP appropriations	541 146.8	90 500.2	631 647.0

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[a] The Administrator is permitted to redeploy between the country offices and headquarters appropriation lines up to a maximum of 5 per cent.

[b] Extrabudgetary income represents income from external sources, exclusive of reimbursements from non-core units; these are included in the appropriation estimates of the non-core units.

13 September 1996

96/42. Global cooperation framework

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the global cooperation framework contained in document DP/GCF/GLO/1;

2. Requests the Administrator to submit to the Executive Board at its first regular session 1997 a revised text of the global cooperation framework, taking into account clarifications given and comments made, and without prejudice to the implementation of the global cooperation framework as presented and orally clarified at the current session to be approved, on a no-objection basis.

13 September 1996

96/43. United Nations Development Fund for Women

The Executive Board

1. Welcomes the report of the external evaluation of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (DP/1996/33), in accordance with Executive Board decision 96/32;

2. Takes note with appreciation of the initial actions being undertaken by the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the proposals on follow-up to the recommendations of the Fund's external evaluation, as reflected in the reaction of the Fund to the evaluation report given during the current session;

3. Requests the United Nations Development Fund for Women to elaborate a more detailed and comprehensive response to the evaluation of the Fund by the first regular session 1997;

Programme strategies

4. Decides that the United Nations Development Fund for Women should produce a concise strategy and supporting business plan that emphasizes its catalytic, mainstreaming and advocacy roles. This should also demonstrate the Fund's intention to work increasingly with strategic and capacity-building activities. The strategy and business plan should clearly identify the Fund's role in the United Nations system and how its work relates to the work of other United Nations bodies. The Fund should report orally on progress at the first regular session 1997 and present the strategy paper and business plan during the annual session 1997;

5. Also decides that, in accordance with the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women and with General Assembly resolution 50/120, the strategy should give due consideration to activities in the least developed countries and low-income countries, particularly in Africa;

6. Recommends that the United Nations Development Fund for Women continue to focus its programme and strengthen programme design and performance;

Management and administration

7. Encourages the United Nations Development Fund for Women to adjust, within the approved budget, its management, administration and personnel, bearing in mind the need to keep administrative costs at an appropriate level;

Coordination

8. Requests that the United Nations Development Fund for Women cooperate closely with the relevant United Nations organs and bodies, in particular the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat, in order to ensure that the Fund's advocacy activities form part of the system-wide efforts of the United Nations in the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, bearing in mind the need to avoid duplication and overlap;

Relationship with the United Nations Development Programme

9. Decides to consider at the first regular session 1997 the request of the Administrator that the United Nations Development Fund for Women may access funds from the support to policy and programme development facility, which will replace the TSS-1 facility in January 1997; and that arrangements be further explored regarding the possibility for the Fund to access United Nations Development Programme resources for purposes within the Fund's mandate and in accordance with United Nations Development Programme mandate and objectives, without jeopardizing the latter's own responsibility for the advancement of women;

Financial and reporting arrangements

10. Agrees to the re-establishment of the operational reserve at the initial level of $3 million and requests the United Nations Development Fund for Women to submit a detailed proposal for the methodology for calculating both the annual approval ceilings and the maintenance of the operational reserve level at the first regular session 1997 in preparation for the re-establishment of the partial funding system;

11. Invites the General Assembly to review the role of the Consultative Committee of the United Nations Development Fund for Women, bearing in mind the need for appropriate governance of the Fund;

12. Invites the United Nations Development Fund for Women to continue its efforts to diversify its resource base by, inter alia, fund-raising from the private sector;

13. Decides that the Fund shall resume biennial reporting on its work to the Executive Board, preferably during its annual session, except where separate reporting arrangements have been requested.

13 September 1996

96/44. Annual review of the financial situation, 1995

The Executive Board

1. Expresses concern over the reduction in voluntary contributions to core resources of the United Nations Development Programme and reiterates its calls on donors to increase their contributions in light of the estimated planning figures for contributions adopted by the Executive Board and encourages the Programme to continue working actively in order to secure a more predictable level of core resources;

2. Notes with concern the build-up in the balance of general resources of the United Nations Development Programme;

3. Also notes the measures taken by the Administrator to address the matter and urges the Administrator to continue the efforts to improve programme delivery, keeping in view the importance of maintaining and improving the quality of programming by the United Nations Development Programme;

4. Decides to continue the application of the agreed formula for determining the level of the Operational Reserve;

5. Requests the Administrator to present by January 1998 a comprehensive review of the whole modality of non-core resources from donor countries in relation to their financial management, focusing on their cost effect on core resources and also requests the Administrator, in this context, to pursue efforts to ensure the substantive alignment of all non-core resources with the mandate and areas of focus of the organization, as contained in decision 94/14, and to define the role of the Executive Board in this process.

13 September 1996

96/45. Documentation

The Executive Board

1. Recalls the importance of strict observance of the resolutions and rules establishing language arrangements for the different bodies and organs of the United Nations, in particular General Assembly resolutions 50/11 and 50/206;

2. Decides to establish page limits for documents to be submitted to the Executive Board, as contained in the annex to the present decision;

3. Requests the Administrator and the Executive Director to continue to uphold and seek to improve the quality of the reports submitted to the Executive Board, making them more concise and action-oriented and to enforce, where appropriate, the page limits set out in the annex to the present decision;

4. Decides that:

(a) Reports over five pages long (excluding country programming documents) shall have an executive summary;

(b) Statistical annexes, tables, case studies and similar documentation shall, to the extent possible, be presented in addenda to the main document;

5. Also decides that any report exceeding the number of pages set out in the annex to the present decision shall be considered only on an exceptional basis and if duly justified to the Executive Board;

6. Requests the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund to comply with the six-week rule established by the General Assembly and most recently reaffirmed in its resolution 50/206 by undertaking all possible efforts to ensure that documents are submitted to the United Nations Office of Conference and Support Services 10 weeks before the start of a session; and to maintain close coordination with the United Nations Office of Conference and Support Services in all matters pertaining to the submission and issuance of documentation, including the electronic distribution of documentation submitted to the Executive Board;

7. Decides, on a temporary basis, that in cases where a report has not been issued in all languages six weeks before the start of a session, the secretariat may distribute advance copies of the report at that time to the members of the Executive Board, including through electronic means where possible, in the language of submission; and that such documentation be also made available to observers at the same time;

8. Requests the Administrator and the Executive Director to examine whether current staffing levels in the respective secretariats are adequate to meet the provisions approved in the present decision for quality, length and timely distribution of documentation;

9. Calls upon all members of the Executive Board to exercise restraint in requesting reports and policy papers and to consider the possibility of greater use of oral reports;

10. Reaffirms the principle of the simultaneous distribution of all conference room papers in the three working languages before the start of or during a session.

13 September 1996

Annex

PAGE LIMITS FOR REPORTS SUBMITTED TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

UNDP

1. Policy papers shall not exceed 15 pages;

2. Country cooperation frameworks shall follow a common format and shall not exceed the range of 6-10 pages;

3. Reports concerning budgetary and financial matters shall not be subject to the 15-page limit but shall nonetheless be as concise as possible, with due regard to the need to present statistical annexes and data in addenda to the main document in line with paragraph 3 of the present decision.

UNFPA

1. Policy papers shall not exceed 15 pages;

2. New country programmes shall not exceed the range of 6-10 pages;

3. Requests for extensions and/or additional resources for country programmes shall not exceed the range of 3-5 pages;

4. Reports concerning budgetary and financial matters shall not be subject to the 15-page limit but shall nonetheless be as concise as possible, with due regard to the need to present statistical annexes and data in addenda to the main document in line with paragraph 3 of the present decision.

96/46. Overview of decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its third regular session 1996

The Executive Board

Recalls that during the third regular session 1996 it:

ITEM 1: ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Approved the agenda and work plan for its third regular session 1996 (DP/1996/L.16 and Add.1);

Approved the following schedule of future sessions of the Executive Board subject to the approval of the Committee on Conferences:

First regular session 1997:	13-17 January 1997
Second regular session 1997:	10-14 March 1997
Annual session 1997:	12-23 May 1997
Third regular session 1997:	15-19 September 1997

ITEM 2: MATTERS RELATING TO RULES OF PROCEDURE, DOCUMENTATION AND THE FUNCTIONING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Adopted decision 96/45 of 13 September 1996 on documentation;

Took note of the interim report on rules of procedure (DP/1996/CRP.12);

ITEM 3: ANNUAL WORK PLAN FOR 1997 FOR THE UNDP/UNFPA EXECUTIVE BOARD

Took note of the outlines of UNDP and UNFPA issues proposed for consideration by the Executive Board in 1997 with the comments made thereon (DP/1996/CRP.13);

UNDP SEGMENT

ITEM 4: MATTERS RELATING TO PROGRAMMING CYCLES: FOLLOW-UP TO EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION 95/26

Took note of the report on the implementation of decision 95/26 on matters relating to programming cycles (DP/1996/27);

ITEM 5: FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Adopted decision 96/44 of 13 September 1996 on the annual review of the financial situation 1995;

Took note of the annual review of net flow of contributions by donor and recipient Governments (DP/1995/28/Add.1);

Took note of the review of trust fund established by the Administrator in 1992-1994 and 1995 (DP/1996/28/Add.2);

Adopted decision 96/40 of 13 September 1996 on management, accountability and the Reserve for Field Accommodation;

Adopted decision 96/39 of 13 September 1996 on UNDP financial regulations and rules;

Adopted decision 96/41 of 13 September 1996 on UNDP revised budget estimates for the biennium 1996-1997;

Took note of the report of the Advisory Committee for Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the revised budget estimates for the 1995-1996 biennium and budget estimates for the 1996-1997 biennium (DP/1996/30);

Adopted decision 96/35 of 10 September 1996 on the Inter-Agency Procurement and Services Office;

Took note of the report on the United Nations system regular and extrabudgetary technical cooperation expenditures (DP/1996/32 and Add.1);

Took note of the report on follow-up information pertaining to cost segments at headquarters in New York (DP/1996/37);

Took note of the report on follow-up to decision 96/21 on support to resident coordinators (DP/1996/CRP.18);

Took note of the follow-up information on the financial situation (DP/1996/CRP.19);

ITEM 6: UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR PROJECT SERVICES

Adopted decision 96/37 of 11 September 1996 on the United Nations Office for Project Services revised budget estimates for the biennium 1996-1997 (DP/1996/36);

Took note of the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the United Nations Office for Project Services revised budget estimates for the biennium 1996-1997 (DP/1996/38);

ITEM 7: COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS

Approved the first country cooperation framework for the People's Republic of China (DP/CCF/CPR/1);

Approved the first country cooperation framework for Viet Nam (DP/CCF/VIE/1);

Adopted decision 96/42 of 13 September 1996 on the global cooperation framework;

ITEM 8: UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN

Adopted decision 96/43 of 13 September 1996 on the United Nations Development Fund for Women;

UNDP/UNFPA SEGMENT

ITEM 9: UNFPA/UNDP: HARMONIZATION OF PRESENTATION OF BUDGETS AND ACCOUNTS

Took note of the oral report of the Administrator of UNDP and the Executive Director of UNFPA;

ITEM 10: REPORT ON FIELD VISIT OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Took note of the report of the field visits of the Executive Board to Malawi and Mozambique (DP/1996/CRP.14);

UNFPA SEGMENT

ITEM 11: UNFPA: FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Took note of the annual financial review, 1995 (DP/FPA/1996/22);

ITEM 12: UNFPA: COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS

Approved assistance to the Government of Honduras (DP/FPA/CP/154);

Approved assistance to the Government of Sri Lanka (DP/FPA/CP/155);

Approved assistance to the Government of Tunisia (DP/FPA/CP/156);

Approved assistance to the Palestinian People (DP/FPA/CP/157);

Approved assistance to the Government of Viet Nam (DP/FPA/CP/158);

Approved assistance to the Government of Cambodia (DP/FPA/CP/159);

Approved assistance to the Government of Zimbabwe (DP/FPA/CP/160);

Approved request for extension of, and additional resources, for the UNFPA country programme for Cuba (DP/FPA/1996/23);

Approved request for extension of, and additional resources, for the UNFPA country programme for Madagascar (DP/FPA/1996/24);

Approved request for extension of, and additional resources for, the UNFPA country programme for Bolivia (DP/FPA/1996/25);

Approved request and additional resources for, the UNFPA country programme for Ethiopia (DP/FPA/1996/26);

ITEM 13: UNFPA: INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION IN HEALTH POLICY AND PROGRAMMING

Adopted decision 96/38 of 13 September 1996 on inter-agency coordination in health policy and programming;

ITEM 14: OTHER MATTERS

Adopted decision 96/36 of 11 September 1996 on the report on accountability in UNDP.

13 September 1996

EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UNDP/UNFPA

ALLOCATION OF SUBJECTS FOR FIRST REGULAR SESSION (13-17 JANUARY 1997)

Item 1. Organizational matters

- Annual work plan 1997
- Rules of procedure

UNDP segment

Item 2. Country cooperation frameworks and related matters

- Country cooperation frameworks
- Regional and global cooperation frameworks
- Report on assistance to Myanmar (96/01)

Item 3. Financial, budgetary and administrative matters

- Audit reports (95/3)
- Implementation of decision 96/40 on management, accountability and the Reserve for Field Accommodation
- Report on the accountability system of UNDP

Item 4. United Nations Development Fund for Women

UNDP/UNFPA segment

Item 5. Harmonization of presentation of budgets and accounts (written report)

UNFPA segment

Item 6. Country programmes and related matters

Item 7. Financial, budgetary and administrative matters

- Audit reports

Item 8. Other matters

Annex II

MEMBERSHIP OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD IN 1996

(Term expires on the last day of the year indicated)

African States: Burundi (1997); Ethiopia (1997); Gambia (1997); Madagascar (1998); Morocco (1996); Sierra Leone (1996); Zaire (1997); Zambia (1997).

Asia and the Pacific States: Bangladesh (1996); China (1997); India (1996); Indonesia (1997); Malaysia (1998); Pakistan (1996); Philippines (1997).

Latin America and the Caribbean States: Argentina (1996); Belize (1998); Cuba (1997); Peru (1996); Trinidad and Tobago (1996).

Eastern European States: Poland (1996); Romania (1998) Slovak Republic (1997); Ukraine (1998).

Western European and other States: Belgium (1996); Canada (1996); Denmark (1996); Finland (1997); Germany (1997); Japan (1996); Netherlands (1998); Portugal (1996); Spain (1996); Sweden (1997); Switzerland (1998); United States (1998).